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P.T.O.

The Desire of All Nations

“**A**ND I WILL SHAKE
 ALL NATIONS,
 AND THE DESIRE OF
 ALL NATIONS SHALL
 COME: AND I WILL
 FILL THIS HOUSE WITH
 GLORY, SAITH THE
 LORD OF HOSTS.”

—HAGGAI 2:7; 520 B. C.

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. . . . The
Desire of All Nations



By
GEORGE FRANCIS ENOCH

|| ||
"I am the Light
of the world."
|| ||

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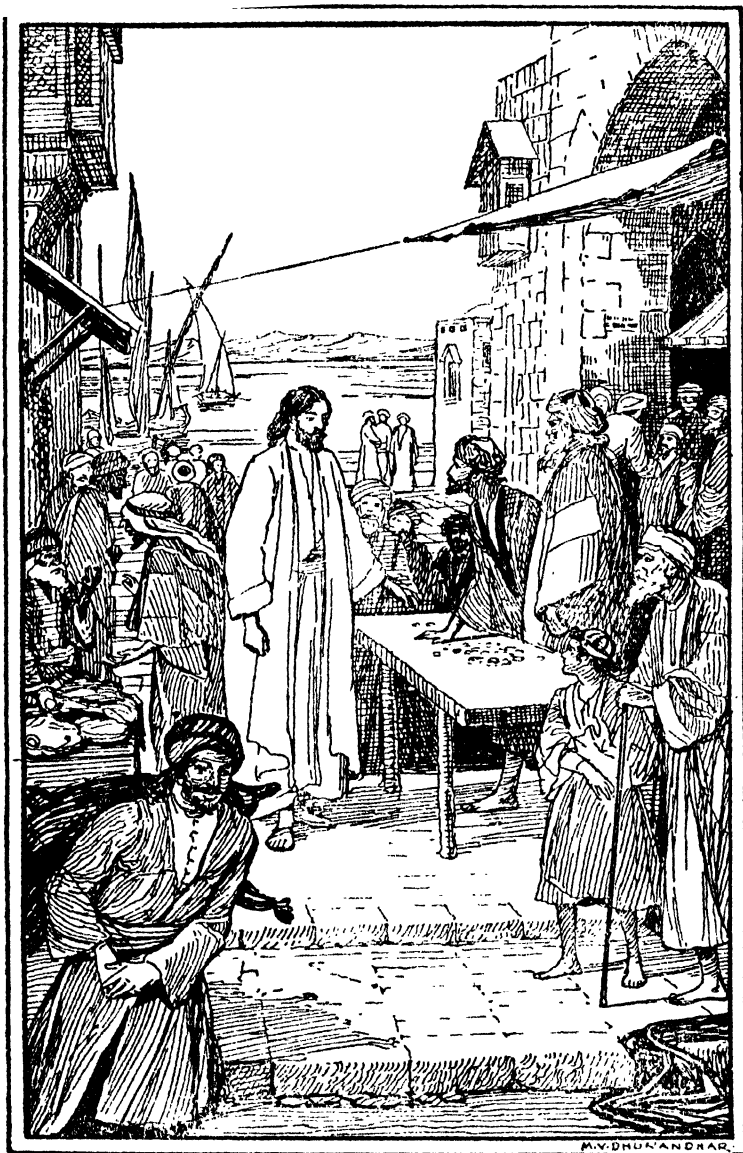
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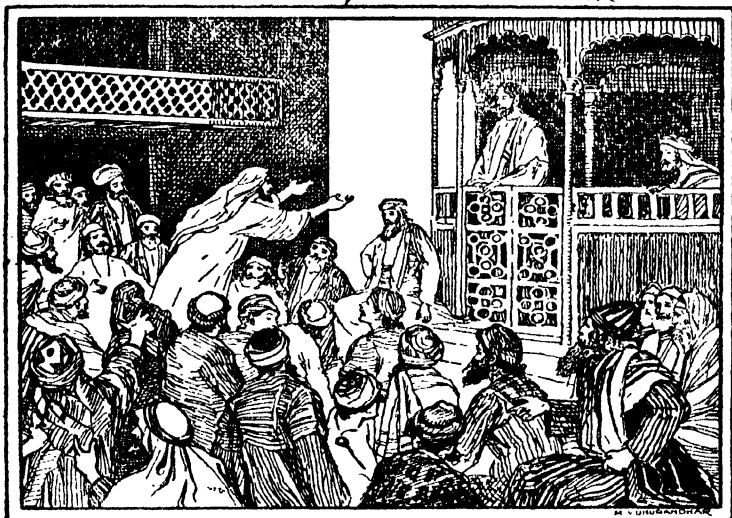
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THE CITY BY THE SEA



Wonderful Day in a City by the Sea

CHAPTER I

IT was a beautiful day in the city by the sea. Throngs of people were making their way toward the house of prayer, for it was the day of a religious festival. On every hand there was an air of expectancy. The news had spread about that the famous Rabbi who had been doing wonderful works in the hill country near by would be present, and all were anxious to see Him. Unheard of things were reported of this Great Teacher. It was said that He had the power of healing the sick with a word, or by the touch of His hand; marvelous stories were whispered of Him as the throngs gathered that day in the house of prayer. "Will He really come?" was the unspoken thought of the entire company. As the hush of expectance settled over the congregation, a man of dignified bearing, followed by several others, entered. He was recognized at once as the much-talked-of Rabbi, accompanied by His disciples. According to Oriental custom He was travelling from place to place

teaching His disciples as He travelled. They passed to the front of the synagogue and seated themselves with the company.

When the time came for the expounding of the Holy Scriptures the authorities handed the Sacred Roll to the Rabbi, and He stood up to read. Great numbers had crowded into the house of prayer, and many were standing outside unable to gain entrance. Yet as soon as He opened His mouth to speak all was quietness. The hopes of the people were aroused to the highest pitch. Their religious teachers were accustomed to expound the Scriptures in such a way as to confuse the mind rather than to edify. As a result the vital truths of life and death, of God and heaven, were involved in obscurity, and the common people were left in uncertainty.

THE RABBI BRINGS GOD NEAR TO MAN

But the moment the much-talked-of Rabbi opened His mouth, the people knew that a divine teacher had come. His sweet, sympathetic spirit was shown in every look and tone. His language was pure and simple. He used neither difficult words nor discussed abstruse subjects. In the language of the common people He took the familiar scenes of daily life and made them vibrant with spiritual meaning. He showed that God is not far away, but is speaking to us constantly through a thousand incidents and experiences of the daily round. The birds of the air, the flowers, the reaping of the grain, the shepherd and the sheep, and many other things of daily life were made to teach lessons of spiritual truth. The minds of His hearers were comforted and edified; heaven was brought near to earth, and hearts were made glad as they realized the nearness of God to man, and His infinite goodness and mercy. The charm of His words won the hearts of the educated, and their simplicity rejoiced the hearts of the unlearned. They were astonished, for His words were with power. "He taught them as one having authority, and not as their Scribes."¹

He watched with deepest interest the faces of His hearers. He flattered none, and spoke no word to please the fancy or to arouse selfish ambition. But He told plainly and simply of the way of truth and salvation. Some humbly accepted the reproof of their evil course, and hailed with joy the prospect of deliverance, while others changed countenance as He relentlessly pointed out their evil ways, and the cold, forbidding look indicated that the message was unwelcome.

The announcement that He had come to establish a kingdom, attracted the attention of all. But lest their hopes should be aroused in a wrong way, He immediately informed them that His

kingdom was not of this world, but its throne and scepter were those of a spiritual kingdom. He said, "The kingdom of God cometh not with observation; neither shall they say, Lo, here! or, lo, there! for lo, the kingdom of God is within you."²

He then further explained that in the mental sphere were battles as actual and victories and defeats even more far-reaching than those among nations. He told them plainly that the unseen world around them was as real as the seen, and that it was peopled with both good and evil spirits. As He described the conflicts of and with this unseen world, many a soul began to understand some of the mysterious struggles of his inner life that had so puzzled him. The Teacher emphasized the reality of the existence of evil spirits and their interference with our earthly life. He told how that by indulgence of evil habits these evil spirits gained control over mind and body, until in the end man's will was wholly surrendered to them.

A MADMAN MADE SANE

He then boldly announced that He had come to establish a kingdom in the hearts of men which would break this bondage to evil spirits and set men free. In many burdened hearts there was kindled a desire for liberty. While still speaking of this possibility of deliverance, He was suddenly interrupted. A poor man, possessed by an evil spirit, whom the people called "mad", rushed forward crying out, "What have You to do with us? have You come to destroy us? I know who You are, God's Holy One."³

At once the entire congregation was thrown into great disorder. All were afraid of this violent madman, and began to shrink back in fear. But the Rabbi, calm in the midst of the confusion, looked fearlessly into the man's eyes, and said, "Silence! come out of him." So the foul spirit, throwing the man into convulsions, came out of him with a loud cry. The "madman" now stood before the great congregation in his right mind, with full possession of all his senses, and immediately began to praise God. The tumult and confusion of the crowd was stilled, and in wonder and amazement they began to say, "What does this mean? Here is a new sort of teaching—and a tone of authority! And even to foul spirits He issues orders and they obey Him!"⁴

While the multitudes were still lost in wonder, the Teacher withdrew Himself from them, seeking rest at the home of one of His disciples. But before He could take rest He was told that this disciple's wife's mother was lying very sick with a high fever. Going to her, He took her by the hand and lifted her up. Immediately the fever left her and she became well and strong again. She at once arose and ministered to them.⁵

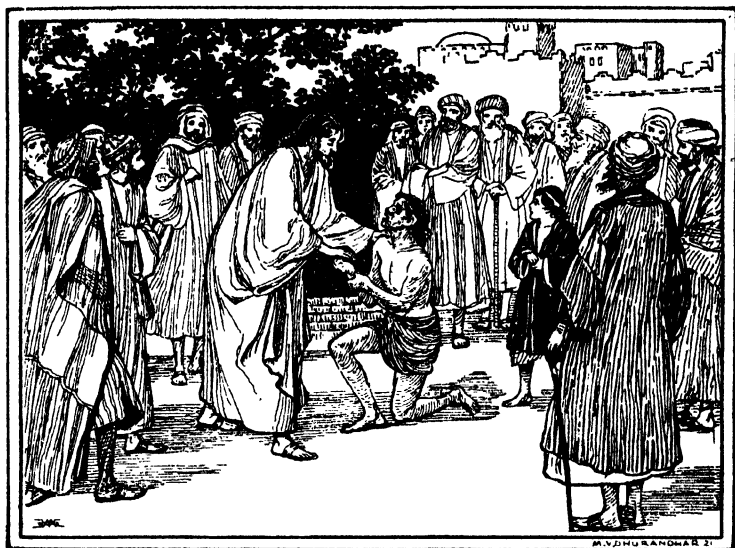
By this time the great crowd from the house of prayer had scattered to all parts of the city, spreading abroad the wonderful news. The word was carried everywhere that a Deliverer had come. One who could rebuke disease and cast out evil spirits. Throughout that city men and women who were sick and suffering, had hope kindled anew within their breasts. Those who were in bondage to evil habits, and to still worse evil spirits, also caught this ray of hope.

As the sun sank behind the western hills, the people pressed eagerly towards the humble home where the Rabbi lodged. They came from the homes of the rich, from the huts of the poverty-stricken, from the market place and the shops. Those suffering from physical or mental sickness anxiously sought the great Healer. Many of the sick were carried on stretchers, some hobbled on crutches, others came assisted by friends. That city had never before had such an experience. The hours slipped rapidly by, and yet the people continued to come and go. Not one was turned away unhelped; no disease was found that the Healer could not cure, or deformity that He could not restore. Here was a divine Physician that no earthly disease could baffle. ⁶

What pen can describe such a scene! In that city by the sea the moan of pain and the cry of anguish gave place to the shout of praise and the song of deliverance. The sufferings of the people had aroused the deepest sympathies of the Healer, and He rejoiced with joy unspeakable as He restored them to health and happiness. He did not cease His work until the last sick and suffering one had been healed. Only then did He and His disciples seek rest.

Before daylight, while the city was still wrapped in slumber, He arose and went out to a retired place for prayer. He there held real communion with God. His hours of prayer were not vain repetitions of meaningless words or formulas; they were rather hours of vital converse with the God of all the universe. Here His disciples finally found Him and told Him that the entire city was seeking Him. They were disappointed when He refused to return to the city. He informed them that they were to proceed to other towns and villages, and said, "I have to tell the Good News of the Kingdom of God to the other towns also, because for this purpose I was sent." ⁷

This Great Teacher was unlike any other that the world had ever seen. He knew that the hearts of men would turn naturally to material things, that they would wish to make Him an earthly king. But worldly success was not what He sought. It would but hinder His work. He was a spiritual worker, and He had come to set the minds and spirits of men free.



The Healer of Both Body and Soul

CHAPTER II

THE great Teacher immediately left the city by the sea and began to tour the surrounding towns and villages. But the fame of His wonderful power had so filled the entire country-side that no building was able to accommodate the multitudes that flocked to see and hear Him. Even in the towns the press of people became so great that He had to go out into the open country. There, under the great spreading trees by the sea-side, or under the open sky, He taught the people and healed the thousands who swarmed around Him. The joy and happiness of the healed ones spread all through the Province. Men had never seen it like this before.

THE HEALED LEPER

There were many lepers in that country, and those afflicted by this dreadful disease were required to leave home and society, and dwell apart in uninhabited places. No one was allowed to come near them; even their very breath was supposed to pollute the

air; whenever anyone approached, they were compelled to cry out, "Unclean! unclean!" so that all might avoid them.

One day while He was teaching by the lake, surrounded by a large crowd, one of these loathsome lepers approached Him. He was a dreadful spectacle. The disease had made much progress, and the man's condition was offensive beyond description. But the news of the great Healer, who was curing all sorts of diseases, had reached the poor leper in his isolation. He had once had a happy home, but the disease had separated him from his loved ones, and he had had no hope of being able to return.

But new hope now sprang up in his heart. "If this wonderful Rabbi can heal all other diseases, why can He not restore me?" was his unspoken thought. So he determined to find the Healer and plead his case. As the leper drew near, the Rabbi was surrounded by a crowd so intent on His teaching that they did not at first notice his approach. As soon as they saw him, with the instinctive feeling of their race, they shrank away from him crying, "Unclean! unclean!", leaving the way open to the Master's feet. No doubt the crowd thought that the Healer also would flee. But He stood without fear, and looked with tender sympathy on the pitiful sight. The leper fell at His feet and pleaded for mercy. "If you are willing," he said, "You are able to cleanse me." Moved with pity, the Healer reached out His hand and touched him, saying, "I am willing, be cleansed."¹ There was instant cleansing and healing. Instead of the touch of the leper defiling Him, the Healer's touch conveyed life and power to the leper. At once the stricken nerves throbbed with life, the impure blood became pure, and the scaly skin was restored to its original healthy colour, becoming as soft and beautiful as that of a little child. His family received him home again with great rejoicing, and a deep impression was made on all his neighbours. So he went about and showed himself everywhere, and the entire country was stirred more than ever.

HEALING OF SOUL

After some days the Rabbi once more entered quietly into the city by the sea. His coming could not be kept secret. The humble home where He lodged was quickly filled with listeners, and there was not even room around the doors, so great was the crowd.

There was a paralytic in the city who had not been able to get to the Healer at the time of His former visit. He was completely paralyzed, and was a pitiable wreck. Death was already working in his body. That which troubled this poor man most was the knowledge that his condition had been brought about by his own sinful life. He was about to die, and his sin-sick soul was of more

concern to him than his suffering body. He longed for some ray of hope that his sins could be forgiven. The priests had told him that his case was hopeless, for, they said, he was suffering under the irrevocable curse of God.

But as he was told the story of the great Healer, hope sprang up in his heart. "If I could but see Him," he said, "He might give me relief of mind, at least." So he persuaded some friends to carry him on a cot to the Healer. As the four men came down the street carrying their burden, they found they could not even get near the door because of the crowd. At last they climbed upon the house, and, removing the tiles, lowered the poor sufferer at the Master's feet. Knowing that the man was longing for a pure mind and for forgiveness of sins more than for mere bodily healing, and looking with love and pity on him, the Healer said, "My son, your sins are pardoned." At once a change came over his entire being. He had peace of mind which he had never hoped would again be his. At the same time his body was healed, and his shattered nervous system completely restored. In joy of sins forgiven he still lay on his cot, too happy for words.

In the meantime some of the priests who stood by, looked quickly at one another and thought to themselves, "Why does this man use such words? He is blaspheming. Who can pardon sins but One—that is, God?"

The Rabbi knowing their unspoken thought, turned on them with a look that pierced them through, and said,

"Why do you thus argue in your minds? Which is easier?—to say to this paralytic, 'Your sins are pardoned,' or to say, 'Rise, take up your mat, and walk?' But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to pardon sins"—

He turned to the paralytic, and said,

"To you I say, 'Rise, take up your mat and go home.'"²

Immediately he sprang up, and with buoyant step took up his cot and went home. With wonder and astonishment the crowd pressed back and said, "We never saw anything like this." At every step the man was praising and glorifying God. A solemn hush settled over them all. "Glory to God!" was the abiding feeling. They felt that they were in the presence of supernatural power, and with fear and reverence said, "We have seen strange things today."³

The man's wife and children were anxiously awaiting his return. For a long time they had been caring for him in his helpless condition. Picture the surprise and great joy of the wife when her husband, whom she had already counted as lost to her, opened

the door and walked in with light step and bright eye carrying the cot on which he had been borne away. She could hardly believe her eyes. We can imagine that at first the children would shrink back in fear of this transformation which was too great for them to comprehend. But the spell of amazement was soon broken, and all crowded around the husband and father, and great joy filled that home.

It was creative power that changed this paralytic from his helpless condition to that of vigour and health. The same power that had brought all things into existence in the beginning, had been manifested through the great Healer. We can but conclude that He was no ordinary man. No mere man could have performed so wonderful a miracle. He is not only able to heal the suffering body, but is also able to restore the sin-sick soul. He calls Himself the Son of man, and has demonstrated that He can forgive sins. By this we know that God had not forgotten the world and left it to be the prey of every sort of sickness and disease. He had entrusted this Son of man with creative power. Let God be praised!



The Gates of Death Opened

CHAPTER III

AFTER several busy months of unwearied service, the great Healer decided to tour the mountain-country not far from the city by the sea. He was followed as usual by a large crowd, and all along the route sick and suffering ones were brought to Him for healing. At last they reached the mountain-country, and began the rugged ascent. Perched high up the mountain side was a village surrounded by a wall. As they drew near, a procession came out of the village gate. It proved to be a funeral procession, and the monotonous cry of the mourners sounded dismally out over the mountain side. On the bier was the body of a young man which almost the entire village was following. The chief mourner was a weeping widow who slowly accompanied the body of her only son to its final resting place. After her husband had been stricken in death, she still had this son to console her, but now the light of her life and her only hope for the future had been taken from her, and, a stricken and broken-hearted woman, alone in the world, she followed the corpse.

The Rabbi's heart was touched with deepest sympathy as He saw the situation. Moved by a pity too deep for words, He took his place beside the weeping widow; drawing near to her in tender sympathy, He said, "Do not weep." She wondered at the strange salutation; but there was something in His bearing and words that kindled hope in her heart. At once He stepped close beside the bier and touched it, bidding the bearers halt. This Healer had no fear of defilement. He who did not fear to touch the leper, feared not to touch the dead. The bearers stood still and the accompanying mourners were hushed into silence. All eyes were now fixed on the Healer as He stood facing the dead. Can He who cleansed the leper, and cast out evil spirits, also conquer death? He spoke and said, "Young man, I command you, awake!" And, marvel of marvels! the young man opened his eyes as though waking from a long sleep! The Healer then took him by the hand and lifted him up, and with the other hand led the startled mother to her son.

The Rabbi had now invaded the domain of death, and had brought back one of its captives to the land of the living. He had given the desolate widow joy instead of sorrow, had turned her weeping into rejoicing, and restored to her the light and joy of her life. The bystanders were stricken with awe, for they felt that God was very near. Some said, "A Prophet, a great Prophet, has risen up among us." Others said, "God has not forgotten His people." ¹ Mother and son returned to their home with great rejoicing.

THE GREAT HEALER IDENTIFIED

These are not fictitious stories. These events really happened, and have been attested by reliable witnesses.

This Great Healer was Jesus of Nazareth. The city by the sea was Capernaum, in the land of Palestine. The purpose of this book is to tell briefly the story of His life, and its meaning. He was the unwearied servant of man's necessities. He came to the world to minister to every need of humanity. He came to bring complete deliverance to man, to give him healing of mind and body, and perfection of character.

During His entire lifetime crowds flocked about Him, and not one went away unhelped. No temple was large enough to receive those who came to hear Him. Wherever He went sufferers were healed, and He passed on leaving them rejoicing in vigorous health. His voice was the first sound that many a deaf ear had ever heard, His face of sympathy and love the first many a blind person had ever looked upon. The dumb sang for gladness, and the crippled and lame leaped for joy and praised God—all because He had passed their way.

And Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease, among the people.²

He might have found His place with the rich and the learned. But He preferred to mingle with the poor and the distressed. Wherever men felt their need of mental or physical healing, He was there to bless. He had no permanent home, but with His twelve disciples went everywhere, bringing heaven near to earth and unselfishly ministering to sin-sick souls. He said of Himself, "I am among you as He that serveth."³

Truly no man ever lived like this man, or ever did what this man has done. We ask, Why? Every nation has had its great men, its religious teachers, who have left a name revered by following generations; but among them all there is not a man like this man. Again we ask, Why? We will find the answer in the record of His birth.



The Annunciation

CHAPTER IV

THE story of the birth of this world-Teacher is worthy of the careful consideration of all. His birth is different from that of all others born into the world. We cannot explain it, or understand it. Who can understand even the mystery of his own birth? Nevertheless we are here; somehow life and intellect have been given us, and we find ourselves a part of the great creation of God. It is all a part of life's mystery—who can explain it?

If therefore our own birth and possession of life is such an inexplorable mystery, why should we not accept in humble faith the record of the birth of Jesus of Nazareth? The story of His miraculous birth is on this wise:—

Many centuries ago God chose a single nation to be the preservers of the eternal religion. Through this peculiar people He proposed to send full salvation to the world. All the truths of this eternal religion were to shine through them to all other nations. This favoured nation was an Oriental nation—the Jews.

The Jewish nation had sprung from a single pious and religious man named Abraham. His birthplace was in an Eastern country, Mesopotamia. In order to found this holy nation, which was to preserve the knowledge of the eternal religion, Abraham was called by God to leave his native land and was given a land called Palestine, on the eastern shores of the Mediterranean. This country became known as "the holy land," and its people "the holy people." Other nations have had natural causes for their origin, as for example, the fruitful Gangetic plain caused the rise and greatness of Hindustan; the strong island situation gave Britain one reason for her development; her isolation on a great and fruitful continent, gave birth to America. But there was no such reason for the origin of Israel. Their sole reason for existence was the purpose of God. For many centuries they were a great nation. Such great kings as David and Solomon ruled over them. Their temple, built by Solomon, was famous in all the world.

THE VIRGIN MARY—OF THE ROYAL LINE

Nearly twenty centuries ago, about two thousand years after the founding of Israel, there lived in a village of the hill-country of the Holy Land, a maiden of the royal line of David. She was an exemplary maiden, humble and true, very pious and well-versed in the religion of her people. Her name was Mary.

She had been betrothed to a man much her senior, Joseph by name, who was also of the royal line. But at the time now referred to the marriage had not yet been consummated.

One day while at her devotions, Mary was startled by the vision of a heavenly angel, who stood near her, filling the room with his brightness. This heavenly angel, whose name was Gabriel, had often visited men. The record of what followed is found in the Scriptures.

Gabriel went into the house and said to her,
"Joy be to you, favoured one! The Lord is with you.
Blest are you among women."

She was greatly agitated at his words, and wondered what such a greeting meant. But the angel said,

"Do not be frightened, Mary, for you have found favour with God. You will conceive in your womb and bear a son; and you are to call his name Jesus (that is Jehovah—the Healer). He will be great, and will be called 'Son of the Most High.' And the Lord God will give Him the throne of His forefather David, and He will be King over the House of Jacob for the ages, and of His Kingdom there will be no end."¹

We can quite understand the fear and surprise of Mary when her devotions were thus strangely interrupted. At last she said to the angel:

"How can this be seeing that I have no husband?"

The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; and for this reason your holy offspring will be called 'the Son of God.' And see, your relative Elizabeth—she also has conceived a son in her old age; and this is the sixth month with her who was called barren. For no promise from God will be impossible of fulfilment.

Mary replied, "I am the Lord's maidservant; may it be with me in accordance with your words!"

And then the angel left her.²

We are now treading holy ground. The great God of the universe was about to bring His Son into the world through the virgin Mary. This was accomplished by the overshadowing of the Holy Spirit. A bright cloud of glory enveloped her, and the Divine energy enabled her to conceive the child Jesus.

MARY'S SONG OF PRAISE

Soon after this, Mary went with her holy secret to visit her relative Elizabeth. As Mary entered the house, Elizabeth, speaking under the influence of the Holy Spirit, said:

"Blest among women are you, and the offspring of your body is blest. But why is this honour done me that the mother of my Lord should come to me? For, the moment your greeting reached my ears, the babe within me leapt for joy. And blessed is she who has believed, for the word spoken to her from the Lord shall be fulfilled."

Then Mary said:

"My soul extols the Lord,

And my spirit triumphs in God my Saviour;

Because He has not turned from His maidservant in her lowly position:

For from this time forward all generations will account me happy.

Because the mighty One has done great things for me—

Holy is His name!—

And His compassion is, generation after generation,

Upon those who fear Him.

He has manifested His supreme strength.

He has scattered those who were haughty in the thoughts of their hearts.

He has cast monarchs down from their thrones,
 And exalted men of low estate
 The hungry He has satisfied with choice gifts,
 But the rich he has sent empty-handed away.
 His servant Israel He has helped,
 Remembering His compassion—
 In fulfilment of His promises to our forefathers—
 For Abraham and his posterity forever.''³

Mary remained with Elizabeth three months. On her return to Nazareth it was made known to Joseph, her espoused husband, that she was with child. The record of Joseph's experience is as follows:

The circumstances of the birth of Jesus Christ were these. After His mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, before they were united in marriage, she was found to be with child through the Holy Spirit. But Joseph her husband, being a kind-hearted man and unwilling publicly to disgrace her, had determined to release her privately from the betrothal. But while he was contemplating this step, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said,

"Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to bring home your wife Mary, for she is with child through the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a Son, and you are to call His name Jesus, for He it is who will save His people from their sins."

All this took place in fulfilment of what the Lord had spoken through the prophet, "Mark! the maiden will be with child, and will give birth to a Son, and they will call His name Immanuel"—a word which signified, 'God with us.'

When Joseph awoke, he did as the angel of the Lord had commanded, and brought home his wife, but did not live with her until she had given birth to a Son. The child's name he called Jesus.⁴

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The Birth of Our Lord

CHAPTER V

JESUS was not born in Nazareth, the home of Joseph and Mary. For economic reasons they had drifted far from their ancestral town. But it was necessary that Jesus should be born in Bethlehem, the city of their forefathers, because an ancient prophet had so foretold.

God moved in a mysterious way to accomplish His word. Just at this time the great Roman Emperor, Augustus Cæsar, decided to take a census of his empire, and decreed that the whole of the population should go to their ancestral towns for registration.

So Joseph took Mary and started on his long journey to Bethlehem, the city of David, their illustrious ancestor. Joseph walked all the way, but Mary rode on an ass. They passed down the mountain on which Nazareth is situated, and traversed the long fruitful valley to the southward. After crossing another range of hills they came to the holy city Jerusalem—the city of the beautiful temple, which was the centre of all the worship of this devout people. They journeyed on to Bethlehem, situated at the top

of a long ridge. At last the weary pilgrims ascended the final slope with a feeling of relief, for they had now reached the end of their long, weary journey.

But alas! because of the census, there were multitudes ahead of them. All the inns and *dharamshalas* were filled to overflowing. Search as he would, Joseph could find no proper place for rest or shelter for his wife. In the end they were compelled to take refuge in a stable.

But while they were there, her full time came, and she gave birth to her first-born son, and wrapped Him round, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.¹

THE ANGEL CHORUS

It is interesting to note the great part played by heavenly angels in connection with the birth of Jesus. These heavenly angels will appear often in the life of this Babe of Bethlehem. We will here and there see the curtain drawn aside, and will have glimpses into Heaven itself. This will not reveal to us either the spirits of the dead or a pantheon of minor gods and deities, as some think, but a host of heavenly angels whose delight it is to serve us who are "heirs of salvation."²

All heaven was supremely interested in this the greatest event that had yet taken place in the universe. "And again, when He bringeth in the first-begotten into the world, He saith, and let all the angels of God worship Him."³ So at this time an innumerable company of angels drew near to earth. Heaven and earth had never been so near before. But the heavenly messengers were able to communicate only with those whose hearts were in tune with God. The great majority of even the "holy people" Israel were so engrossed in either material things or in a round of lifeless ceremonies, that the angels could not get in touch with them. There was nearby, however, a group of devout shepherds whose hearts were in harmony with God, and who believed the words of the ancient prophets that the Messiah was about to be manifested. As they watched their flocks by night on the plain near Bethlehem, they recounted the promises of the Holy Scriptures, and longed for the coming of this Anointed One.

The night that Jesus was born in the manger, these shepherds beheld a wonderful scene.

Suddenly an angel of the Lord stood by them, and the glory of the Lord shone round them; and they were filled with terror. But the angel said to them,



THE SHEPHERDS VISIT THE BABE IN THE STABLE

"Put away all fear; for I am bringing you good news of great joy—joy for all the people. For a Saviour who is the Anointed Lord is born to you today, in the town of David. And this is the token for you: you will find a babe wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger."⁴

This angel had come to prepare the shepherds for the more glorious vision to follow. No sooner had he ceased speaking than there appeared with him a multitude of the angels of heaven singing and praising God. Such music mortal ears had never before heard. They were saying,

"Glory be to God in the highest Heavens, And on earth, Peace among men (His) good pleasure!"

Then, as soon as the angels had left them and returned to Heaven, the shepherds said one to another,

"Let us now go over as far as Bethlehem and see this that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us."

So they made haste and came and found Mary and Joseph, with the babe lying in the manger. And when they saw the child, they told what had been said to them about Him; and all who listened were astonished at what the shepherds told them. But Mary treasured up all these things, often dwelling on them in her mind. And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all that they had heard and seen in accordance with the announcement made to them.⁵



The Truly Pious Welcome the Sent of God

CHAPTER VI

OTHERS besides the shepherds welcomed the coming of this Divine Child into the world. Many pious hearts both from among the Jews, God's chosen people, and from among other nations were looking for the Anointed of God who would be sent into the world to destroy evil and to establish the reign of righteousness.

In order to understand the meaning of the various events in the life of this Sent of God, which otherwise would be inexplicable mysteries, we must bear in mind the great conflict between the forces of good and evil. This conflict began among the angels in heaven. The Holy Scriptures tell us that one of the highest of these angels, whose name was Lucifer, or Light-bearer, revolted and became the Devil, or Satan—the very personification of all that is evil and wicked in the universe.

Thus Satan succeeded in leading many angels with him in revolt, and by deceiving the forefathers of the human race, gained a foothold on this planet. We have not space here to give even the briefest outline of the story of this great struggle between the forces of good and evil. We can only call attention to it that we may, rightly understand the incidents in the life of this Anointed Servant of Jehovah. His life is the culmination of this great conflict. We see only the human actors, but behind every event are the hosts of good and evil spirits, or angels, who are fighting to a finish the battle that will determine whether the human race is to be free, or is to sink into the bondage of eternal despair.

We will therefore expect to find these two contending forces clearly defined in the life of the Sent of God.

At the time of His birth all Israel were expecting a Messiah. But Satan, the great leader of the forces of evil, knowing also that the time was at hand, had ensnared the majority of the Jewish nation, and as a result they were proud and selfish. They looked for a great king who would break the hated Roman yoke, for they were a subject nation of the great Roman Empire.

Even the religious leaders and teachers were as a class proud and haughty, and their religion consisted largely in a round of rites and ceremonies, rather than in pious hearts under the control of the Holy Spirit. All were not like this, but in the history of the life of the Sent of God we will see that the majority rejected Him.

THE WELCOME IN THE TEMPLE

Both among the common people and among the priests there were those who were so under the control of the Holy Spirit, and were so closely in touch with God, that they recognized the Sent of God in Jesus the Son of Mary.

To illustrate this let us take the story of the welcome accorded Jesus in the temple at Jerusalem.

The Jews believed that there was but one God. Although they had houses of prayer in every town and village, yet they had but one temple, and that at the holy city, Jerusalem. To this temple forty days after his birth, the babe Jesus was brought for dedication, according to the custom of the Jews.

Now there was a man in Jerusalem of the name of Symeon, an upright and God-fearing man, who was waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him. To him it had been revealed by the Holy Spirit that he should not see death until he had seen the Lord's Anointed One.

Led by the Spirit he came to the Temple; and when the parents brought in the Child Jesus to do with regard to

Him according to the custom of the Law, he took Him up in his arms, and blessed God and said,

"Now, O Sovereign Lord, Thou dost send Thy servant away in peace, in fulfilment of Thy word,

Because mine eyes have seen Thy salvation,

Which Thou hast made ready in the sight of all nations—

A light to shine upon the Gentiles,

And the glory of Thy people Israel."

And while the Child's father and mother were wondering at the words of Symeon concerning Him, Symeon blessed them and said to Mary the mother,

"This child is appointed for the falling and the uprising of many in Israel, and for a token to be spoken against; and a sword will pierce through your own soul also; that the reasonings in many hearts may be revealed."

There was also Anna, a prophetess, the daughter of Phanuel, belonging to the tribe of Asher. She was of a very great age, having had after her maidenhood seven years of married life, and then being a widow of eighty-four years. She was never absent from the Temple, but worshipped, by day and by night, with fasting and prayer. And coming up just at that moment, she gave thanks to God, and spoke about the Child to all who were expecting the redemption of Jerusalem.¹

Thus we see how that the Sent of God was welcomed by the angels, by the humble shepherds, and by pious Symeon and Anna. But as He was the Desire of All Nations, we will learn in the next chapter how He was welcomed and worshipped by the representatives of other nations also.



The Wise Men from the East

CHAPTER VII

THE Sent of God was desired and expected by many others besides the Jews. He is the Desire of All Nations. So at His lowly birth men of other nations, representing the great world lying beyond Jewry, came to welcome and worship Him. This is illustrated by the visit of "The Magi," sometimes called "The Wise Men from the East."

Now after the birth of Jesus, which took place at Bethlehem in Judea in the reign of King Herod, excitement was produced in Jerusalem by the arrival of certain Magi from the East inquiring,

"Where is the newly born king of the Jews? for we have seen His Star in the east, and have come here to do him homage." ¹

Just who these wise men from the East were, or how many, is not known. The gifts they made suggest that there were three. From their name, "Magi," it is supposed that some of them at



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THE THREE WISE MEN WORSHIP THE BABE

least were Persians. Popular tradition pictures them as coming from Persia, or from other Eastern lands. At any rate the word "Magi" is of Aryan origin. 12358

That which had attracted their attention and had drawn them to Jerusalem was a strange star that had suddenly appeared in their Eastern sky. In the Orient there was a priestly class known as Magi who were astrologers. It was their business to study the movements of stars, which were supposed to have great influence over earthly affairs. Among these were upright and honest men who were not idolaters, but who worshipped the one true God who made and upholds all things. They were keen students of God's ways in nature, and learned all they could of Him from nature's open book.

The Holy Scriptures tell of one of these men, Balaam by name, who seems to have had great influence in the East, and lived about 1500 B. C. He was the author of the famous prophecy that a special star should appear in the heavens heralding the advent of God's Anointed. He said,

"I see Him, but not now; I behold Him, but not nigh;
There shall come forth a star out of Jacob, And a scepter
shall rise out of Israel."³

God accepts such devout worshippers of Him as these Magi, and impresses their minds with divine truths. The Magi knew something of the prophecies which predicted that the time for the coming of the Sent of God was at hand. As they studied the starry heavens which shone so clearly over their Eastern plains, they were startled by the appearance of a new and unknown star. They finally concluded that it must be the star foretold by Balaam which was to herald the birth of the Sent of God.

In dreams some of the most pious of these Magi were told to go in search of this wonderful babe. As the babe was to be a great King, they followed the custom of the East and prepared costly and precious gifts to take as the tokens of their homage. The Orient abounded in precious things, and so they started on their journey with gifts worthy of Him whom they were to worship.

They travelled wholly by night, for the star which they had seen moved on before them and became their guide. This star was doubtless some of that same angel host that had appeared to the shepherds near Bethlehem. So again we learn that heaven drew near to earth at the birth of Jesus. But the vision was only for those in touch with God. As among the chosen people, so here among the nations of the East, a few were found whose worship was so true, and whose lives were so pure, that they also could catch the vision and follow the heavenly gleam.

Tradition pictures these men as travelling on camels. When they reached the city of Jerusalem they rejoiced because their long journey was now ended. With eager inquiry they searched for this new-born King.

THE ARRIVAL IN JERUSALEM

The news of the coming of these wealthy strangers and their mysterious tale was soon spread throughout the city, penetrating even to the palace of king Herod. Now king Herod was a usurper. In constant fear lest some one should wrest the throne from him, he had committed many murders, including that of his own son and also of his wife. He was therefore much disturbed by the rumour of a new-born Prince.

Reports of the arrival of the Magi soon reached the king, and greatly agitated not only him, but all the people of Jerusalem. So he assembled all the High Priests and Scribes of the people, and anxiously asked them where the Christ was to be born.

"At Bethlehem in Judea," they replied; "for so it stands written in the words of the Prophet, 'And thou, Bethlehem in the land of Judah,

By no means the least honourable art thou among the princely places in Judah:

From thee shall come a Prince—

One who shall be the Shepherd of My People Israel.'"

Thereupon Herod sent privately for the Magi and ascertained from them the exact time of the star's appearing. He then directed them to go to Bethlehem, adding,

"Go and make careful inquiry about the child, and when you have found Him, bring me word, that I too may come and do Him homage."

The Magi had been disappointed and discouraged by their cold reception, and by the contempt with which they had been treated. Were they to be disappointed at the last? The religious leaders of the Jews had mocked their message. They said, "Would God pass us by to reveal so great a truth to ignorant shepherds and uncircumcised Gentiles?" Those rulers in this way started on that downward path that led them to crucify the Lord. They not only refused to go to Bethlehem to investigate, but they used their influence to discourage others.

But the message of Herod brought new hope and courage to the Magi.

After hearing what the king said, they went to Bethlehem, while, strange to say, the star they had seen in the East led them on until it came and stood over the place where the babe was. When they saw the star the sight filled them with intense joy. So they entered the house; and when they saw the babe with His mother Mary, they prostrated themselves and did Him homage, and opening their treasure-chests offered gifts to Him—gold, frankincense and myrrh.³

As soon as they reached the babe their doubts and fears vanished. They were convinced that this was really the Anointed One sent from God to banish evil and bring salvation to all the world. They worshipped the babe with all the sincere devotion of their hearts. Even to their gifts has been given a symbolic meaning. Because these wise men knew that this humble babe was both human and divine, destined to rule the hearts of all men, they brought gold for His royalty, frankincense for His divinity, and myrrh for His humanity. These were the first disciples of Jesus from the Far East, and are the pledge of that larger number from the Orient who will yet acknowledge Him as King of their hearts and lives.

THE FLIGHT INTO EGYPT

The same divine providence that we have seen guiding so far in the life of Jesus is now again manifested.

But being forbidden by God in a dream to return to Herod, the Magi went back to their own country by a different route.

When they were gone, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said,

"Rise: take the babe and His mother and escape to Egypt, and remain there till I bring you word. For Herod is about to make search for the child in order to destroy Him."

So Joseph roused himself and took the babe and His mother by night and departed into Egypt. There he remained until Herod's death, that what the Lord had said through the prophet might be fulfilled,

"Out of Egypt I called My Son."

Then Herod, finding that the Magi had trifled with him, was furious, and sent and massacred all the boys under two years of age, in Bethlehem and all its neighbourhood, according to the date he had so carefully ascertained from the Magi. Then were these words, spoken by the prophet Jeremiah, fulfilled,

"A voice was heard in Ramah,
Wailing and bitter lamentation:
It was Rachel bewailing her children,
And she refused to be comforted because they were no more."

But after Herod's death an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, and said to him,

"Rise from sleep, and take the child and His mother, and go into the land of Israel, for those who were seeking the child's life are dead."

So he roused himself and took the child and His mother and came into the land of Israel. But hearing that Archelaus had succeeded his father Herod on the throne of Judea, he was afraid to go there; and being instructed by God in a dream he withdrew into Galilee, and went and settled in a town called Nazareth, in order that those words spoken through the prophets might be fulfilled,

"He shall be called a Nazarene."⁴

HIS EARLY LIFE IN NAZARETH

Here in Nazareth He grew up through youth into manhood. His mother was His teacher in His earliest years. But He lived very near to nature. He loved God's two books, the Holy Scriptures and the book of nature. Through communion with God He developed His mental and moral faculties, and His spiritual powers became strong. But He was not idle. All through His early life He was an earnest worker at His trade. With Joseph and His brethren He worked in the carpenter's shop. The citizens of His home town said of Him in later life, "Is this not the carpenter"?⁵ He thus dignified honest toil for all time.

The record of His life in Nazareth is very brief:

Then, as soon as they had accomplished all that the Law required, they returned to Galilee to their own town of Nazareth. And the child grew and became strong and full of wisdom, and the favour of God rested upon Him.⁶



The Forerunner

CHAPTER VIII

NOT only was the birth of the Sent of God miraculous—but God also in a remarkable way raised up a forerunner, whom He prepared from birth to go before the face of His Anointed One and make ready the hearts of the people to receive Him. This herald's name was John. Many centuries before the birth of either Jesus or John the ancient prophets had foretold exactly the birth and the work of both. God has not left us any room for doubt in these matters. He chose one nation—Israel—through whom He was to send this Desire of All Nations. He committed to them the pure principles of the eternal religion; He sent them great prophets through whom He revealed His divine will. Everything has happened all through the ages just as these prophets predicted. In the birth of these two boys, as in many other things, the records of history have been but an exact response to the voice of prophecy. When we consider how impossible it is for even the wisest of men to accurately predict the future, or to tell beforehand what even one day may bring forth, our minds are lost in wonder as we note the literal fulfilment in

minutest detail of so many of these words of prophecy spoken centuries before.

HIS DEDICATION TO A HOLY LIFE

According to the instructions of the angel Gabriel, who had appeared to his father, Zacharias, announcing that he would be born, this boy was named John—a name not found in his father's family. Because it violated all the hereditary customs of their family it was unacceptable to the relatives. However, both the father and mother insisted on following the instruction of the angel, and he was dedicated as a Nazarite from his birth. By that vow he was under a pledge to forsake all the usual pleasures and luxuries of the world, to live simply and to observe all the laws of the Nazarite. The boy gladly accepted his mission, and co-operated with his parents and with God in preparing for the important work before him.

And the child grew and became strong in character, and lived in the Desert till the time came for him to appear publicly to Israel.¹

So John became a *Sadhu*. In the desert he was alone with God and with his own soul. Here he obtained mental strength and spiritual insight by self-discipline and self-denial and by meditation on the Word of God. The Holy Scriptures were his constant companions, and he lived in an atmosphere of communion with God.

But John differed from other *Sadhus*. Generally they dwell apart from men for their own spiritual benefit only. They do not go apart for a time in order to bring back the benefits they receive to a needy world. Unlike such *Sadhus*, John had no thought for himself. He sought the deeper spiritual life in order that he might lift his nation to that higher spiritual level where they would appreciate and welcome God's Anointed, who had already been born among them.

John was to call proud, pleasure-loving Israel to repentance in order that the Messiah might be manifested. Israel was looking for an earthly king, and the only defilement which they constantly feared was ceremonial defilement. John brought to them the higher conception of a kingdom of God that ruled in the hearts of men, and a purity of heart that was as high above mere ceremonial purity as the heavens are higher than the earth.

THE HERALD BEGINS HIS WORK

When the time arrived for the announcement of the Messiah's advent, John made his appearance preaching in the Desert of Judea.

"Repent," he said, "for the kingdom of the Heavens is now close at hand."

He it is who was spoken of through the Prophet Isaiah when he said,

"The voice of one crying aloud,
In the Desert prepare ye a road for the Lord;
Make His highway straight." ²

The striking symbol of the prophet was the Oriental custom of preparing a road for the coming of a king. Runners went before; stones were removed; high places levelled; depressions filled up—the king was coming.

In this same way John prepared the way for the coming of the Saviour-king. He was a voice, and that voice was the voice of God. John himself could remain in the wilderness, but the voice penetrated the streets and lanes of the cities, even to the most remote villages of the mountains. In response to this voice multitudes filled every road with anxious throngs, hastening to the river Jordan in the wilderness.

When the multitudes came to John they did not hear a message of peace. They listened to no pleasing words lulling them to a false security. "Repent ye;" "Change your hearts;" "The Kingdom of Heaven is at hand, and if it finds you in your present state of mind and heart it will be your damnation and not your salvation." Such was the burden of the message that they heard.

As the people listened, conviction gripped their hearts, for John spake by inspiration of the Holy Spirit. They began to weep and mourn for their sins, asking John, "What shall we do?" John then instituted the ordinance of baptism. When they had shown true sorrow for their sin by confessing and forsaking it, John took them out into the water and buried them there, a fit symbol of the cleansing of the heart by the Holy Spirit, and of their death to sin.

THE ETERNAL RELIGION RE-ESTABLISHED

For five hundred years no prophet like this had appeared in Israel. Now all the nation was moved by a common impulse toward the Jordan.

The Jews had always prided themselves on the fact that they were the chosen people of God, and that other nations were without the pale. John told them that, in so far as this Kingdom of Heaven was concerned, they were on no better footing than the other nations; and that they, the proud Jews, must submit to baptism, just the same as others. John, turning to their religious leaders, said,

"O vipers' brood, who has warned you to flee from the coming wrath? Therefore let your lives prove your change of heart; and do not imagine that you can say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our forefather,' for I tell you that God

can raise up descendants for Abraham from these stones. And already the axe is laying at the root of the trees, so that every tree which does not produce good fruit will quickly be hewn down and thrown into the fire. I indeed am baptizing you in water on a profession of repentance; but He who is coming after me is mightier than I: His sandals I am not worthy to carry for a moment; He will baptize you in the Holy Spirit and in fire. His winnowing-shovel is in His hand, and He will make a thorough clearance of His threshing-floor, gathering His wheat into the storehouse, but burning up the chaff in unquenchable fire." ³

In this way the Prophet of the Desert swept aside all non-essentials and re-established the pure principles of the eternal religion. Neither pride of birth or social standing or meticulous carefulness about ceremonial defilement commends the soul to God. Not by its name, but by its fruit, is the value of the tree made known. Our standing before God is determined by our character, and that is manifested by our life. Mere profession of holiness, or the meaningless repetition of names or formulas commend no one to the living God.

So as Israel flocked to the Desert they were taught that only as they were willing to be cleansed from sin could they be ready to welcome the Messiah. Only the pure in heart could recognize this coming One.

Many heeded the preaching of John and were baptized. In this marvelous manner did God prepare the way for the coming of His Anointed. The hour had struck for Jesus to leave the carpenter's shop in Nazareth and begin His life-work.



The Anointing

CHAPTER IX

AFTER the Province of Judea had full opportunity of hearing his message, John the Baptist moved northward along the Jordan River, and finally came in touch with the Province of Galilee. In an uncommon manner the news of his coming was carried to every village, and the people of Galilee began to flock to the Jordan to hear the message of repentance and to receive baptism. John constantly preached that the Anointed of God was already among them and that he was but preparing the way. He said.

"There is One coming after me mightier than I—One whose sandal-strap I am unworthy to stoop down and unfasten. I have baptized you with water, but He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."

This announcement placed all on the tip-toe of expectancy, and they eagerly carried the news back to their homes. The discussion finally reached the carpenter's shop in Nazareth, where

the young Man who was known as Jesus of Nazareth was quietly working. In the work of John the Baptist, this young Man heard the divine call that the time to begin His life work had come. He therefore laid aside the carpenter tools and joined the crowds that were moving towards the Jordan.

John knew through revelation that some day the Sent of God would come to him while he was preaching and baptizing. We can imagine him anxiously scanning the faces of the crowds thronging him from day to day as he eagerly awaited the promised signal. At last Jesus stood before him. He presented Himself for baptism with the others. John, at once recognizing Him, shrank from baptizing Him, and instead requested baptism at His hands.

"It is I," he said, "Who have need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?"

"Let it be so on this occasion." Jesus replied; "for so we ought to fulfil every religious duty."

Then he consented; and Jesus was baptized. ²

He was not baptized for His own sins, for He was sinless. His coming into the world was for the deliverance of sinful men. He became our Brother; He identified Himself with us and took our sins upon Himself. Therefore to take the same steps that man must take was His duty.

His baptism marked a new era in the life of Jesus. He emerged from the obscurity of the years at Nazareth to undertake His public ministry. The few years remaining of His earthly life were to be crowded full of teaching, healing all manner of diseases, and casting out evil spirits. From that day He was to be the unwearyed servant of man's necessities.

But the new era meant more than this. It was the unsheathing of the sword. The religious leaders were already moved with jealousy, and were determined not to acknowledge one who did not bow to them, and whom they were not permitted to introduce to the people. When they scornfully rejected the message of the wise men from the East they started on that downward road that made them the implacable enemies of the Sent of God.

Behind religious leaders stood Satan, the unrelenting foe of God. That controversy, begun in heaven, was now transferred to earth. This unseen foe had already made the path of Jesus of Nazareth difficult. He now redoubled his efforts and did not relax them for the remainder of the earthly life of the Sinless One.

GOD PROCLAIMS JESUS HIS SON

At that time Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan; and immediately on His coming up out of the water He Saw an opening in the sky,

and the Spirit like a dove coming down upon Him; and a voice came from the sky, saying.

"Thou art My Son dearly loved: in Thee is My delight." ³

The world had never before witnessed such a scene as this: Jesus of Nazareth is here claimed by God Himself as His own Son. He is therefore the Son of the eternal Father. We have already learned that Jesus had no earthly father. He had been with God from eternity. The ancient prophet Micah who had foretold the place of His birth had said, "Whose goings forth are from of old, from everlasting." ⁴ Another prophet had said of Jesus, "Jehovah possessed Me in the beginning of His way, before His works of old. I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, before the earth was. . . . When He marked out the foundations of the earth; then I was by Him, as a master-workman; and I was daily His delight, rejoicing always before Him." ⁵ Again and again in the Holy Scriptures is this Son of God declared to be the Agent in the creation of the world.

Christ is the visible representation of the invisible God, the Firstborn and Lord of all creation. For in Him was created the universe of things in Heaven and on earth, things seen and things unseen, thrones, (earthly and angelic) dominions, principdoms, powers—all were created, and exist, through and for Him. And HE IS before all things and in and through Him the universe is a harmonious whole. ⁶

The supreme place of this Son of God in the universe is thus made plain.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing that exists came into being. In Him was life and that Life was the Light of men. . . . And the Word came in the flesh, and had his tent for a time in our midst, so that we saw His glory—the glory as of the Father's only-born Son, sent from His presence. He was full of grace and truth. ⁷

Jesus constantly claimed to be the Son of God. With His own lips He made clear His relation to His Father in Heaven. He said in one of His last prayers,

"Father, do Thou glorify me in Thine own presence, with the glory that I had in Thy presence before the world existed." ⁸

On one occasion He said to His enemies:

"My Father works unceasingly, and so do I." On this account then the Jews were all the more eager to put Him to

death—because . . . He spoke of God being in a special sense His Father, thus putting Himself on a level with God."

At this same time He further said,

"In most solemn truth I tell you that a time is coming—nay, has already come—when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear it will live. For just as the Father has life in Himself, so He has also given to the Son to have life in Himself." ⁹

On another occasion Jesus announced this stupendous fact to a man whom He had just healed. He said to him.

"Do you believe in the Son of God?"

"Who is He, Sir?" replied the man. "Tell me, so that I may believe in Him."

"You have seen Him," said Jesus, "and not only so; He is now speaking to you."

"I believe, Sir," he said, and threw himself at His feet.¹⁰

This wonderful truth that Jesus is the Son of God was attested many times.

As Jesus, the Son of God, knelt there on the bank of the Jordan River after His baptism, He received the assurance of His Sonship, and was anointed of God for His earthly ministry. God from Heaven claimed Him as His Son, and declared that the work which Jesus was about to begin had the divine approval. As He was doing all this for us, we have in this the assurance that we who believe are accepted of God through Him. From this time forward Jesus of Nazareth is the Anointed of God.

We can again re-live in imagination this scene at the Jordan. While the multitude watched with bated breath, John, pointing to Jesus, said,

"Look, that is the Lamb of God who is to take away the sin of the world! There is He about whom I said, 'After me is to come One, who has been put before me, because He was before me.' I did not yet know Him; but that He may be openly shown to Israel is the reason why I have come baptizing in water."¹¹



The Temptation

CHAPTER X

BEFORE God's Anointed One began His public ministry it was necessary for Him to withstand the greatest temptations possible to human flesh. An untempted Christ would be outside our moral sphere. Man has fallen from his first estate and must have deliverance from the power of sin that has corrupted his heart. In the beginning man was created pure and holy. But Satan, the great deceiver, came to him in his sinless state, and overcame him. He then fell from his high estate, and the human family has been subject to sin and death ever since.

Only God, the Son, through whom man had been created, could break this thralldom of sin. For this reason He took human flesh. It was to conquer Satan that He was born a man among men.¹ There was no other way to lend a helping hand to fallen humanity than for this Son of God to take flesh and blood, and become our Elder Brother. He must meet Satan on our ground and there conquer him. By this means instant help would be made available for all who are tempted. Of Jesus it is said:

For we have not a High Priest who is unable to feel for us in our weaknesses, but one who was tempted in every respect just as we are tempted, and yet did not sin. Therefore let us come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our times of need.²

We are in the enemies land, and each day's progress is a battle and a march. Jesus has located our deadly foe, and here in the wilderness, unmasked the hidden batteries of iniquity. This was His first responsibility after His baptism. The record says :

Then Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan, and was led about by the Spirit in the Desert for forty days, tempted all the while by the Devil. During those days He ate nothing, and at the close of them He suffered from hunger.³

And He was among the wild beasts, but angels waited upon Him.⁴

THE FIRST TEMPTATION—THE TEST ON APPETITE

So the Tempter came and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, command these stones to turn into loaves."

"It is written," replied Jesus, "'It is not on bread alone that a man shall live, but on whatsoever God shall appoint.'"

THE SECOND TEMPTATION—YIELDING THE WILL TO THE ADVERSARY

Then the Devil took Him to the Holy City and caused Him to stand on the roof of the Temple and said,

"If you are God's Son, throw yourself down; for it is written,

"To His angels He will give orders concerning thee,

And on their hands they shall bear thee up,

Lest at any moment thou shouldst strike thy foot against a stone."

"Again it is written," replied Jesus, "'Thou shalt not put the Lord thy God to the proof.'"

THE THIRD TEMPTATION—THE TEST ON LOVE OF THE WORLD

Then the Devil took Him to the top of an exceedingly lofty mountain, from which he caused Him to see all the kingdoms of the world and their splendour, and said to Him,

"All this I will give You, if You will kneel down and do me homage."

"Be gone, Satan!" Jesus replied; "for it is written, 'To the Lord thy God thou shalt do homage, and to Him alone shalt thou render worship.'" *

Thereupon the Devil left Him, and angels at once came and ministered to Him.⁵

So the Devil, having fully tried every kind of temptation on Him, left Him for a time.⁶

These three final overmastering temptations came at the close of the forty days' fast and comprehended all the temptations possible to humanity. Jesus here touched the secret springs of all human trouble. He not only won the victory over appetite thus bringing hope to the drunkard and the vicious, but He also overcame the danger of yielding to the temptation of pride or social position and of worshipping the Devil, even though he came as an angel of light. He thus fought and won the battle for the entire range of tempted men from the highest to the lowest.

The first temptation was on the point of appetite. Yielding to the appetites and passions is the besetting sin of the human family. "The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak."⁷ We parley with sin and are overcome. The only way not to sin is to say, "I will not think it." No man yet has ever succeeded in overcoming the impulse to express eventually in action that which he allows to occupy his thoughts. Our great Exemplar did not parley with Satan; He gave no place to his suggestion of doubt; His confidence in God remained unshaken; He used not His own divine power, but replied "It is written."

In the second temptation Satan tried presumption, his great counterfeit of faith. Both claim the promises of God; faith,—to do God's will and bring forth fruit for God; presumption,—to carry out the impulses of the human will and excuse transgression. It is presumption that leads men into temptation unbidden, and into the excess of extravagant things which weaken the testimony of the professed followers of Jesus. Faith complies with the conditions while claiming the favour of heaven.

The third and last time Satan tempted Jesus, he tried Him on one of humanity's weakest points, the love of the world. To many a man he has come since that, offering the world and its riches and splendour in return for just a little homage. Many men have yielded, to their eternal loss. But Jesus did not yield. Once more He met Satan with an "It is written." No other power did He use than we may use. The written words of God are within our reach. Only through them can we conquer. It is in submission to God's will as revealed in His Word, that we can be victorious. "Submit therefore to God; resist the Devil, and he will flee from you. Draw near to God, and He will draw near to you."⁸

Satan trembles and flees before the weakest soul whose trust and confidence is in the Word of God.

THE VICTORY WON

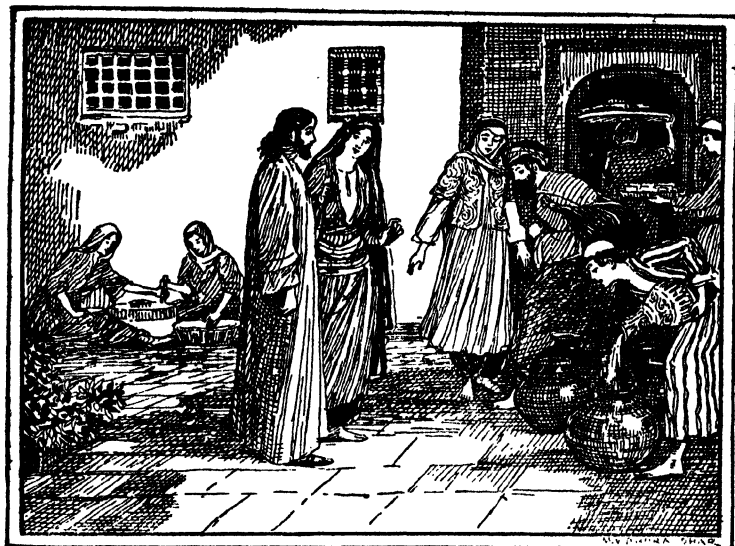
The fierceness of this struggle in the Desert is shown by the fact that when this last temptation was successfully overcome, Jesus fell fainting to the ground. Then angels came and ministered to Him.

For Jesus during His earthly life offered up prayers and entreaties, crying aloud and weeping as He pleaded with Him who was able to bring Him in safety out of death, and He was delivered from the terror from which He shrank. Although He was God's Son, yet He learned obedience from the sufferings which He endured; and so, having been fully consecrated to His work, He became to all who obey Him, the source and giver of eternal salvation.⁹

The human mind and flesh of Jesus were tested to the utmost. The perfection of character which He attained was not due to an inability to sin, but came from His ability to conquer sin. The goodness of Jesus was not that of untried innocence, but that of victorious virtue. Struggle against evil built the fibre of His manhood—temptations fierce and strong were to Him but opportunities for conquest and growth.

If we wish to test a rope so as to bear a ton's weight, it matters not whether the weight used be a ton of lead or a ton of feathers. Even so if the exact temptations be not identical with ours, yet the weight of it all rested on Jesus. He met it and won the victory. How much it cost Him we shall never fully know.

One striking thought in connection with the truths of this chapter is that this record is strictly autobiographical. Jesus was alone in the Desert with Satan and the wild beasts. Unless our Lord had bared the inner meaning of these experiences we should never have known them. Let us show our gratitude by accepting the power He has brought us, and overcome as He overcame. He was victorious and His victory is ours.



Water Changed to Wine

CHAPTER XI

AT the very beginning of His ministry Jesus chose twelve disciples. He did not go to the homes of wealth or to the halls of learning for them. He chose humble but sincere and honest men to follow Him. By taking men of average abilities He brings courage to the mass of mankind, for He made of them the founders of His Church, demonstrating what He can do with anyone who submits to Him.

THE FIRST DISCIPLES

The first disciples of Jesus, named Andrew and John, had been disciples of John the Baptist. They left John and followed Jesus when John had said, "Look, that is the Lamb of God who is to take away the sin of the world." Thus Jesus asserted His paramount claim over all disciples of every other religious teacher. John on his part became the exemplar of every other

teacher by releasing them, saying, "He must grow greater, but I must grow less." ¹

Andrew went to seek his brother Simon Peter, who was to become one of the most noted of the disciples. He said to him. "'We have found the Messiah!'"—that is to say, the Anointed One."² Philip, of the same town, was also called, and Philip called Nathaniel, a very pious young man. Later while James and John, and Peter and Andrew were fishing, Jesus said to them "Come and follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men."³ They immediately left all and followed Him.

Jesus did not begin his public ministry by doing some great thing at Jerusalem. On the contrary His first act was to attend a wedding feast at an unimportant village in the mountains of Galilee. He and His disciples received an invitation to this feast in the village of Cana near Nazareth. It was probably the marriage of a relative. Mary the mother of Jesus was also present. So Jesus, the Sent of God, honoured the marriage institution by His presence.

Those things which had happened at the Jordan River were generally known. The presence of the great Teacher with His disciples at this wedding feast no doubt attracted much attention. "Is this truly the Messiah?" was the thought of many hearts. One can well imagine the pride of Mary, His mother, as she noted the great interest taken in her Son. She knew well the secret of His birth, and believed Him to be the Sent of God. She would be more than human if she were not anxious for this Son of hers to manifest Himself. In common with the Jews she held the erroneous idea that the Anointed of God would rule as an earthly king.

Then a wonderful thing happened. The marriage festivities had lasted several days, and unexpectedly the wine ran short. Disgrace threatened those responsible for the feast. Knowing Him to be the Sent of God, Mary at once came with a request.

Two days later there was a wedding at Cana in Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there, and Jesus also was invited and His disciples. Now the wine ran short; whereupon the mother of Jesus said to Him,

"They have no wine."

"Leave the matter in my hands," He replied; "My hour has not yet come."

His mother said to the attendants,

"Whatever He tells you to do, do it."

Now there were six stone jars standing there (in accordance with the Jewish regulations for purification), each large enough to hold twenty gallons, [eighty *seers*] or more. Jesus said to the attendants,

"Fill the jars with water."

And they filled them to the brim. Then He said,

"Now, take some out, and carry it to the President of the feast."

So they carried some to him. And no sooner had the President tasted the water now turned into wine, than—not knowing where it came from, though the attendants who had drawn the water knew—he called to the bridegroom and said to him,

"It is usual to put on the good wine first, and when people have drunk freely, then that which is inferior. But you have kept the good wine till now."

This, the first of his miracles, Jesus performed at Cana in Galilee, and thus displayed His glorious power; and His disciples believed in Him.

One can easily picture the great interest aroused in Jesus, the Son of Mary, because of this miracle. To change water into wine by a word was evidence of more than human power. It was definite proof that God had come down to visit man. No one but the God who each year changes water to wine through the regular course of nature, as manifested in the growing grape, could change water to wine by a word. This wine was not the fermented wine that makes one drunken and beclouds the mind. It was the pure juice of the grape, sweet and wholesome, that brings joy and gladness to the hearts of men.

This incident clearly pointed to the fact that Jesus, the son of Mary, was the Son of God. Yet He acknowledged also the claim of human relationship by doing as His mother requested.

One more lesson is important for us. Jesus was the Son of God, and had come to earth on a most important mission. His stay on earth was all too brief, yet he found pleasure in an innocent social gathering. Thus He honoured the marriage institution and emphasized the necessity of social intercourse. This was a typical feature of His entire life. Jesus was not a recluse nor an ascetic. He did not withdraw Himself from man. He reached the hearts of men by going among them, mingling with them, making their joys and their sorrow His own. This strong personal sympathy, manifested in a thousand ways, won many hearts.

This example we should follow. We should not join in sinful pleasures that destroy the soul, but we can mingle with our fellow-men, striving by every means possible to win them to God.



“Ye Must Be Born Anew”

CHAPTER XII

SOON after the marriage feast in Cana of Galilee Jesus and His disciples went up to Jerusalem, the city of pilgrimage, to attend one of the religious festivals of the Jews.

In this city was the great temple, the pride of the Jewish nation. The original temple, one of the most magnificent the world has ever seen, was built by the famous king, Solomon. That beautiful building had been destroyed in the wars, but was rebuilt later. King Herod had recently spent forty years in enlarging and beautifying it. This temple had been honoured of God as no other building had ever been honoured. In its inner sanctuary the Holy Shekinah had dwelt, that visible manifestation of the glory of God to which no man but the regularly appointed priests could approach and live.

THE CLEANSING OF THE TEMPLE

To this temple now came the Sent of God. Worshippers from all parts of the world came here to worship and to offer the

sacrifices prescribed by God. They came with the coin of many different countries, and it was necessary to change their coins into the temple money so that they could buy their sacrifices. The usual sacrifice was a sheep or a goat. For those too poor to buy these, large numbers of pigeons and doves were available. There were also cattle for the wealthy or for special offerings.

As the Sent of God looked over this noisy scene of buying and selling, of rattling of coins and bickerings over exchange, of bleating sheep and lowing cattle, of taking advantage of the poor and the strangers through the cupidity of those who should have been the religious teachers—as He saw all this in the House of Prayer, indignation and righteous anger filled His soul.

As though drawn by a magnet, all faces turned towards Him; the confusion was hushed; the sound of trafficking and the bargaining ceased, all eyes were centered on His face as though they were in the presence of the Judge of all the earth. The wicked traffickers drew back in fear. Then, plaiting a whip of cords, Jesus descended into the court and, raising it cried, with a voice of divine authority, "Take these things away. Do not turn my Father's House into a market."¹

He overturned the tables of the money changers and the money fell clanging on the pavement. Bargaining priests, brokers and dealers in sheep and cattle rushed from the place as though pursued by divine justice.

When the profaners of the temple were gone, the sick and suffering crowded in and Jesus healed them all. The place that so recently had been the scene of unholy bargaining became a place of prayer and praise. As His disciples watched the scene, there came to their minds the words of the ancient prophet:

"My zeal for Thy House will consume me."

So the Jews, asked Him,

"What proof of your authority do you exhibit to us, seeing that you do these things?"

"Demolish this sanctuary," said Jesus, "And in three days I will rebuild it."

"It has taken forty-six years," replied the Jews, "to build this Sanctuary, and will you rebuild it in three days?"

But he was speaking of the Sanctuary of His body.²

THE VISIT OF THE WEALTHY RULER

But some of the rulers who saw these things were sincere men, and were much impressed. They knew the danger of rejecting the Messiah. Among such was a wealthy man named Nicodemus, who determined to investigate further.

Now there was one of the Pharisees whose name was Nicodemus—a ruler among the Jews. He came to Jesus by night and said, "Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher come from God; for no one can do these miracles which you are doing, unless God is with him."

"In most solemn truth I tell you," answered Jesus, "that unless a man is born anew (from above) he cannot see the Kingdom of God."

"How is it possible," Nicodemus asked, "for a man to be born when he is old? Can he a second time enter his mother's womb and be born?"

"In most solemn truth I tell you" replied Jesus, "that unless a man is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the Kingdom of God. Whatever has been born of the flesh is flesh, and whatever has been born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not be astonished at my telling you, 'Ye must all be born anew!' The wind blows where it chooses, and you hear its sound, but you do not know where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone who has been born of the Spirit."

"How is all this possible?" asked Nicodemus.

"Are you," replied Jesus, "'the Teacher of Israel,' and yet do you not understand these things? In most solemn truth I tell you that we speak what we know, and give testimony of that of which we were eye-witnesses, and yet you all reject our testimony. If I have told you earthly things and none of you believe me, how will you believe if I tell you of things of heaven? There is no one who has gone up to Heaven, but there is One who has come down from Heaven, namely the Son of Man whose home is in Heaven. And just as Moses lifted high the serpent in the Desert, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, in order that everyone who trusts in Him may have the Life of the Ages."³

The proud and haughty Pharisee felt that his high birth alone guaranteed him entrance into the kingdom of the Messiah. But Jesus most solemnly told him that unless he experienced the new birth from above he could not even see this Kingdom of God.

Like so many religious teachers, Nicodemus tried to parry conviction by entering into abstract argument. Jesus firmly but gently held him to the point that it was not theory but spiritual regeneration that he must have. Discussion was of no value; he must obtain an actual experience. Jesus was not there to satisfy his curiosity, but to see that he had a new heart.

Jesus did not argue, but in kindness taught him that the natural heart is "deceitful above all things and desperately wicked."⁴ He told him that the carnal mind is at war with God, and could not be subject to His law. He reminded Nicodemus of the famous question and answer of the Patriarch of old, "Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? Not one."⁵ Nicodemus should have understood all this. The famous prayer of King David was known to all. "Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me."⁶ The promise of a new heart and a new spirit had been made through another prophet, Ezekiel.⁷

THE VISIBLE RESULTS OF INVISIBLE POWER

No human skill can change a sinful heart. But God has sent the mighty power of the Holy Spirit into the world for this very purpose. To the questioning ruler of Israel Jesus tried to make this plain. Human eyes cannot see the wind, but we can feel it as it fans our cheeks, and we can see it move the branches of the tree. Likewise a divine power which no human eye can see enters the heart and we are born anew into His Kingdom.

Our earthly life has been imparted to us by our earthly father. Likewise this divine life is imparted to us by our Father in Heaven. This Father of us all again and again comes to us to plead with us to receive Him and be born anew into this Kingdom. The great majority reject this pleading voice, and will never see the Kingdom of Heaven.

Jesus is that true light which illumines every man by its coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world came into existence through Him, and the world did not recognize Him. He came to the things that were His own, and His own people gave Him no welcome. But all who have received Him, to them—that is, to those who trust in His name—He has given the privilege (power) of becoming children of God; who were begotten as such not by human descent nor through an impulse of their own nature, nor through the will of a human father, but from God.⁸

So when we receive in our hearts this Sent of God we are reborn and become sons and daughters of God. This is a real transaction which begins in us the life of the eternal ages and makes us heirs of the world to come. Until this transaction takes place in our hearts we are merely existing; it is only when we are born from above that we really begin to live.

Jesus came to establish this spiritual kingdom. All its citizens acquire citizenship through the new birth, and will live forever.

Our hearts cry out, "Lord how may I have this new birth?"

Jesus answers, "Just as Moses lifted high the serpent in the Desert, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, in order that every one who trusts in Him may have the Life of the Ages."

The reference here is to Israel's journey through the desert of Sinai. While on that journey they pitched their camp in a place infested by many poisonous serpents. Thousands of people were bitten and many were dying. God instructed Moses to make a serpent of brass and put it on a pole in sight of the people. All who looked to this serpent were healed.⁹

LOOK AND LIVE

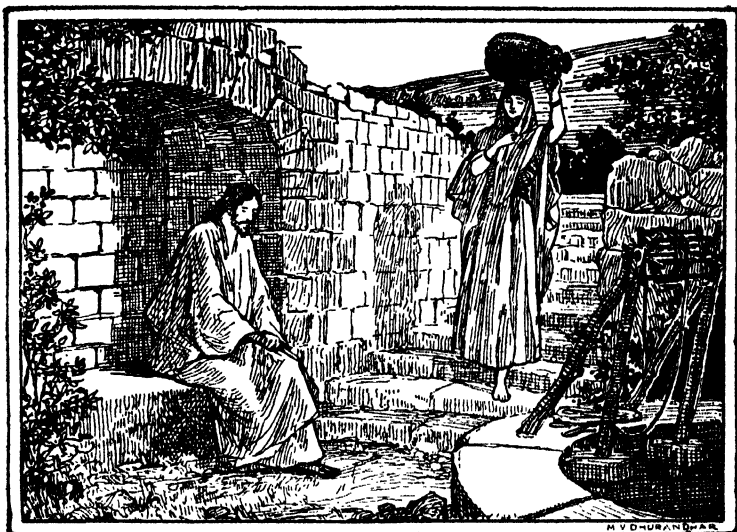
So the message of the serpent lifted up in the wilderness is, "Look and live."

In this same way Jesus saw that He was to be lifted up on the cross before the whole world, so that all who have within them the deadly virus of sin might look and live.

Let us never forget that this new birth comes through looking to the Sent of God. "Behold, the Lamb of God, that beareth the sin of the world."¹⁰

At this time Jesus told Nicodemus that most famous of all His sayings:

"For so greatly did God love the world, that He gave His only Son, that every one who trusts in Him may not perish but may have the Life of the Ages. For God did not send His Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through Him. He who trusts in Him does not come up for judgment. He who does not trust has already received sentence, because he has not his trust resting on the name of God's only Son. And this is the test by which men are judged—the Light has come into the world, and men loved the darkness more than they loved the Light, because their deeds were wicked. For every wrong doer hates the light, and does not come to the light, for fear his actions should be exposed and condemned. But he who does what is honest and right, comes to the light in order that his actions may be plainly shown to have been done in God."¹¹



The Fountain Within

CHAPTER XIII

BETWEEN Jerusalem and Galilee, the home of Jesus, lay the country of the Samaritans. In the time of David the entire Holy Land was peopled by the Jewish nation, divided into twelve tribes. Because of their sins the Lord brought against them a strong nation, and many from among ten of the tribes were carried away captive to a foreign land. Strange nations were brought from distant lands to take their place. They mingled with the original Israelites, and a mixed race developed. The people that emerged from these troubles were called Samaritans. The Jews regarded them as outcasts, and had no social relations with them.

As Jesus with His disciples returned from Judea they passed through the country of the Samaritans. Weary, hungry and thirsty, about noon they reached a large well just outside the city. The disciples hastened into the city to get some food for the Master, while Jesus rested in the cooling shade near the well. While here one of the outcast Samaritan women came to draw

water. Jesus did not despise this poor woman, but at once entered into conversation with her, and tried to bring her help. He began one of His most wonderful sermons, not by offering to give her anything, or by any act of superiority, but by the simple request for a drink of water.

LIVING WATER

"How is it," replied the woman, "that a Jew like you asks me, who am a woman, and a Samaritan, for water?" (For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans.)

"If you had known God's free gift," replied Jesus, "and who it is that said to you, 'Give me some water,' you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water."

"Sir," she said, "you have nothing to draw with and the well is deep; so where can you get the living water from? Are you greater than our forefather Jacob, who gave us the well, and himself drank from it as did also his sons, and his cattle?"

"Everyone," replied Jesus, "Who drinks any of this water will be thirsty again; but whoever drinks any of the water that I shall give him will never, never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become a fountain within him of water springing up for the Life of the Ages."

"Sir," said the woman, "give me that water, that I may never be thirsty, nor continually come all the way here to draw from the well."

By this conversation Jesus was leading the mind of this poor woman to spiritual things. He who drinks only from the fountains of this world thirsts again. What this world has to offer can never satisfy the soul. This thirst of soul can be satisfied by only One, the Sent of God, Jesus of Nazareth, who is the Desire of All Nations.

The well of water springing up within is the Holy Spirit of God—the great gift which Jesus had come to make available in His fulness. But one can not receive this Holy Spirit until he has repented of his sins and has accepted Jesus as his personal Saviour.

For this reason Jesus at once turned the woman's attention to her sinful life.

"Go and call your husband," said Jesus; "and come back."

"I have no husband," she replied.

"You rightly say that you have no husband," said Jesus; "for you have had five husbands, and the man you have at present is not your husband. You have spoken the truth in saying that."

Immediately conviction gripped her heart. Here is a man who was able to tell her all the secrets of her inner life. Jesus was

trying to first make her acknowledge her sin, and then recognize Him as her Saviour.

But it is not easy to acknowledge and confess one's sins. Rebellious human nature is too proud to acknowledge its inborn wickedness. So the experience of this poor woman illustrates a universal truth. No sooner was her mind under conviction of sin than she tried to parry conviction by theological argument.

TRUE WORSHIP

"Sir," replied the woman, "I see that you are a Prophet. Our forefathers worshipped on this mountain, but you Jews say that the place where people must worship is in Jerusalem."

"Believe me," said Jesus, "the time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. You worship One of whom you know nothing. We worship One whom we know; for salvation comes from the Jews. But a time is coming—nay, has already come—when the true worshippers will worship the Father with true spiritual worship; for indeed the Father desires such worshippers. God is a Spirit; and those who worship Him must bring Him true spiritual worship."

This is one of the most important truths taught by the Master. God is a Spirit and can accept only spiritual worship. It is not by seeking any holy mountain, or sacred river that we can find real communion with God. He is everywhere present in His universe by His Spirit, and our spirits can enter into communion with Him at any place, under any condition, providing our hearts are cleansed from sin. A clean heart is what God requires. Fasts, pilgrimages, washings, all externals are utterly useless and cannot commend us to God or restore communion with Him. "God is a Spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth."

Jesus said "We worship One whom we know." In this the religion of the Bible is distinguished from all others. Idolaters worship many gods, with no definite knowledge of any one of them. Philosophers advance many theories, only to see them discredited one by one by later developments. But in the eternal religion we deal not with hypotheses nor with idols, but with a great loving Personality, One whom we can know with certainty.

At last the woman's heart was won. She recognized in this stranger Jew, the Saviour of the world. She yielded her arguing and said,

"I know that Messiah is coming—'The Christ' (Anointed of God) as He is called. When He has come, He will tell us everything"

"I am He," said Jesus—"I who am now talking to you."

Just then His disciples came, and were surprised to find Him talking with a woman. Yet not one of them asked Him, "What is your wish?" or "Why are you talking with her?"

The woman, however, leaving her pitcher, went away to the town and called the people.

"Come," she said, "and see a man who has told me everything I have ever done. Can this be the Christ, do you think?"

They left the town and set out to go to Him. Meanwhile the disciples were urging Jesus, "Rabbi," they said, "eat something."

"I have food to eat," He replied, "of which you do not know."

Jesus had forgotten His desire for food in His joy of ministering salvation to a lost soul. His mind was following the woman as she gave her testimony in the city. With joy He saw the favourable response of the people. But the question of the disciples recalled His mind to material things, and instead of satisfying their curious questioning He tried to lift their minds to the higher spiritual things, and rebuke their feeling of superiority to others whom they considered outcasts.

So the disciples began questioning one another.

"Can it be," they said, "that some one has brought Him something to eat?"

"My food," said Jesus, "is to be obedient to Him who sent me, and fully to accomplish His work. Do you not say, 'It wants four months yet to the harvest?' But look round, I tell you, and observe these plains—they are already ripe for the sickle. The reaper gets pay and gathers in a crop in preparation for the Life of the Ages, that so the sower and the reapers may rejoice together. For it is in this that you see the real meaning of the saying, 'The sower is one person, and the reaper is another.' 'I sent you to reap a harvest which is not the result of your own labours. Others have laboured, and you are getting benefit from their labours.'"

But we must turn our minds from the discussion concerning a spiritual harvest, to the actual harvest itself that even now awaited gathering in Samaria.

Of the Samaritan population of that town a good many believed in Him because of the woman's statement when she declared, "He has told me all that I have ever done."

When, however, the Samaritans came to Him, they kept on asking one after another that He should stay with them; and

He stayed there two days. Then a far larger number of people believed because of His own words, and they said to the woman,

"We no longer believe in Him simply because of your statements; for we have now heard for ourselves, and we know that this man really is the Saviour of the world."

Here among the despised Samaritans many were converted. This work was not accomplished through any miracle but through a simple conversation which brought home to the heart of the woman conviction of her sins.

Among the important lessons for us in this incident is that we must not hold caste feelings or wait only for appointed times to minister salvation to lost souls. Jesus was a great personal worker. Some of His greatest sermons, like this one, were taught to a congregation of just one. But who can measure the results?

THE HOLY SPIRIT

Another important lesson is that of the "fountain within." "But that water that I shall give him will become a fountain within him of water springing up for the Life of the Ages." There is nothing we need more than this "living water within." What did Jesus mean? Is it possible for us to have this experience also?

On a later occasion Jesus addressing a large congregation, said,

"Whoever is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, from within him as the Scripture hath said—rivers of living water shall flow."

He referred to the Spirit which those who believed in Him were to receive; for the Spirit was not bestowed as yet, because Jesus had not yet been glorified.

So this "water of life" is the Holy Spirit. He comes to us in fulness through Jesus Christ. We cannot receive Him so long as we regard Jesus merely as a great Teacher, Example or Friend. I can have the Holy Spirit in His blessed fulness only when Jesus is glorified by me, enthroned within as my Saviour and as the absolute Lord and Ruler of my heart and life.

The Holy Spirit is the presence of God in the universe. It is His power that is manifested in the wonderful works of nature about us. Through Jesus the Holy Spirit comes and abides in my heart, and, welling up within me, purifies the very fountain of my life, enabling me to think pure and holy thoughts, and to live a virtuous and spotless life. Will you not yield your all to this wonderful Saviour so that you may have this unfailing supply of "living water" within?



The Attempt to Crown Him King

CHAPTER XIV

AFTER returning to Galilee, Jesus and the disciples had become weary and exhausted through their constant ministry to the needs of the people. So many were coming and going that they could not even find time to eat. Herod, the son of the one who had tried to kill Jesus at His birth, had just beheaded John the Baptist, who had been the herald of Christ. So Jesus decided to retire for a season of rest and recuperation. With His disciples he went to the jungle country on the other side of the lake.

The people heard where He had gone, and all day they gathered from all the towns and villages of the northern side of the lake, many even coming from Capernaum, until there had come together five thousand adult men besides women and children.

Jesus came out from His place of meditation and prayer, and watched the multitudes gather. It was nearing the time of the Passover festival at Jerusalem, and many were on their way to attend that feast. They were not receiving from their religious teachers the help for which their souls were longing. So now they were turn-

ing to Jesus. As Jesus saw them He was moved with compassion and sympathy too great for words. He said they were like sheep scattered over the hills without a shepherd, so He descended among them and spent the rest of the day teaching them about the kingdom of God, and healing all who were sick or suffering.

MULTIPLYING THE LOAVES

After Jesus had spent the day teaching and healing, and the men, women and children had all day long hung on His gracious words with no thought for themselves, the disciples said,

"This is an uninhabited place, and the best of the day is now gone; send the people away to go into the villages and buy something to eat."

"They need not go away," replied Jesus, "you yourselves must give them something to eat."

"We have nothing here," they replied, "but five loaves and a couple of fish."¹

Jesus said to Philip:

"Where shall we buy bread for these people to eat?"

He said this to put Philip to the test, for He Himself knew what He was going to do.

"Seven pounds (about 100 rupees) worth of bread," replied Philip, "is not enough for them all to get even a scanty meal."

One of His disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, said to Him:

"There is a boy here with five barley loaves and a couple of fish; but what is that among so many?"

"Make the people sit down," said Jesus.²

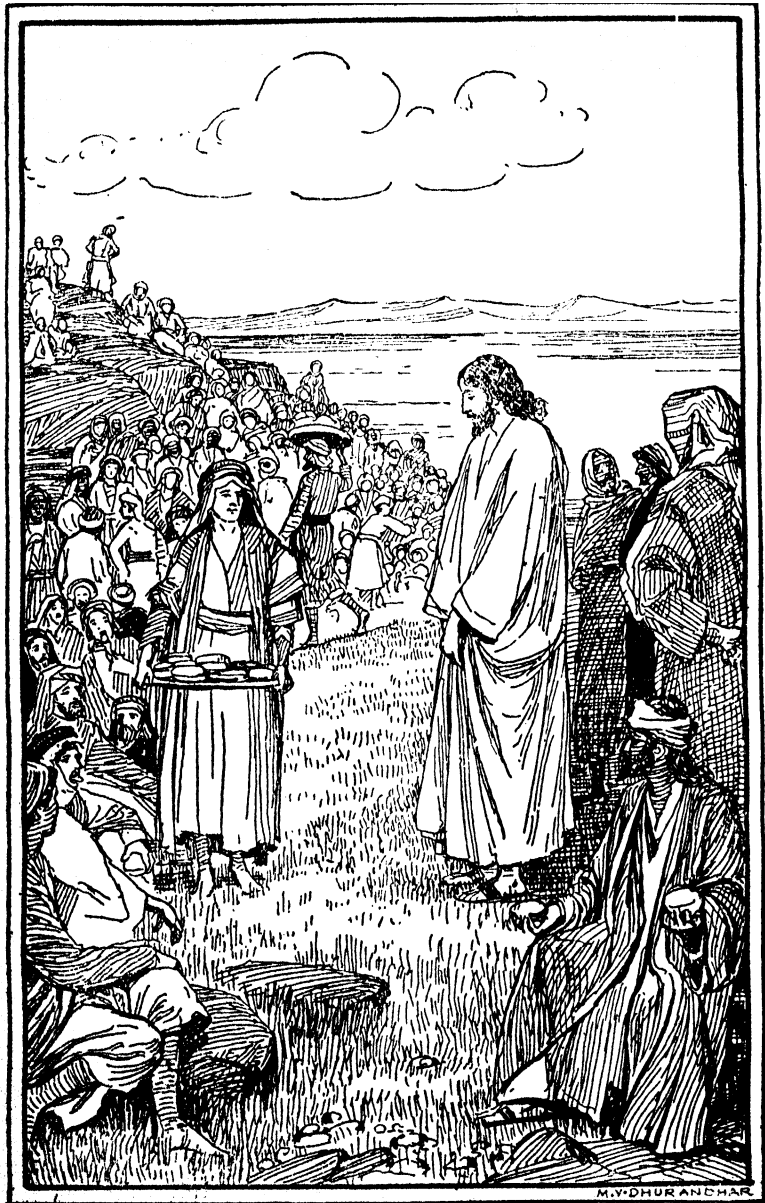
So He directed them to make all sit down in companies on the green grass. And they sat down in rows of hundreds and of fifties. Then He took the five loaves and the two fish, and lifting His eyes to Heaven, He blessed the food. Then He broke the loaves into portions which He went on handing to the disciples to distribute; giving pieces also of the two fish to them all. All ate and were fully satisfied.³

When all were fully satisfied, He said to His disciples,

"Gather up the broken portions that remain over, so that nothing be lost."

Accordingly they gathered them up; and with the fragments of the five barley loaves—the broken portions that remained over after they had done eating—they filled twelve baskets. Thereupon the people, having seen the miracle He had performed, said,

"This is indeed the Prophet who was to come into the world."⁴



JESUS MULTIPLIES THE BREAD TO FEED THE MULTITUDE

This is one of the most impressive incidents in the life of God's Anointed. His sympathy for the multitude, especially for the women and children who had taken no food all day, shows that He was interested in the material food of His people as well as in the spiritual food—and that He was as able to supply the one as the other. But He did not give them luxuries. He provided the simple but substantial fare of the common people and they were satisfied.

Here Jesus lifts the veil from the ordinary operations of nature and manifests Himself as the One who daily works through natural agencies to supply the world with food. Under ordinary circumstances He sends the sunshine and the rain and in the course of a few weeks, through nature's laws, multiplies the single grain many fold. This day He took a shorter way, demonstrating that He is the Lord of nature by doing the same work instantly. In reality the miracle of the harvest from year to year is but the wonder-working power of this same Lord of nature.

Although furnishing so abundant a supply, Jesus still taught a lesson in economy by ordering the "gathering up of the broken portions that remain over, so that nothing be lost." This does not seem to have been the crumbs dropped by the eaters, but the portions broken by the Master Himself for distribution, but not used. The disciples and Jesus were so busy ministering to the hungry people that they did not eat until all were satisfied. After they had finished, the people carried away twelve baskets full of these unused portions—all from five loaves and two fishes, and that after the many thousands had eaten and were satisfied.

One lesson taught by Jesus in this miracle is our absolute dependence on God. It was not because of any carelessness on His part that Jesus found Himself with a hungry multitude in that desert place. In His need He turned to His Father in heaven—and was not disappointed. So may we in our times of need trust God. He who would not perform a miracle in the first temptation in the wilderness, to satisfy His own hunger, would not allow a hungry multitude to go away unfed.

The disciples saw the need and came to Jesus requesting that something be done. They were surprised at the command that they were to give food. Finally they received, to give to others. They were the channels through which this great blessing came to the people.

Likewise we must not ask for ourselves. We must ask that we may have to give to others. It is in unselfish ministry to the needs of those around us that we enter into the closest fellowship with God. As we see the needs, we must not, like Philip, give the answer of unbelief, but we must consecrate our little store for service, trusting God to multiply it.

To the people who had participated in this great blessing, that evening seemed to be the close of a perfect day.

THE ABORTIVE ATTEMPT TO CROWN JESUS KING

The words of Jesus had sounded in their ears like the voice of God, and their souls had been satisfied; His works of healing had banished all pain and suffering—surely the works of God; and now to close the day, the miracle of multiplying the loaves, had crowned it all.

They said "This is more than human: He is the expected Messiah; we will now crown Him our King."

As they passed the word around great joy filled their hearts, for now the Roman yoke would be broken, and Israel would be made the rulers of the world. Worldly peace and prosperity seemed already to open before them. The disciples eagerly joined the conspiracy. They also were obsessed by the long-cherished hope and popular delusion of the Jewish people. They considered that Jesus was so humble and unselfish that He would never assert His right. They must take Him by force and proclaim Him King. But Jesus knew what was on foot and at once took steps to stop it.

He perceived, however, that they were about to come and carry Him off by force to make Him a King.⁵

Immediately afterwards He made the disciples go on board the boat and cross to the opposite shore, leaving Him to dismiss the people. When He had done this, He climbed the hill to pray in solitude. Night came on and He was there alone.⁶

Jesus refused to be made an earthly king and to conquer the Romans and the world. He was Saviour-King. That is, He had come to conquer sin, and set men free from its bondage. They offered Him a throne outside themselves; He demanded a throne within. His kingdom was therefore to be in the hearts of men, and He was to conquer not by the power of the sword, but by the Holy Spirit through the power of love. Such a kingdom, to be won and held by such a power alone, was as yet beyond the conception of even His disciples. This kingdom was to be as limitless as the heavens. He was to lead a revolution, not of states, but of souls; to proclaim a release, not from despotism but from sins. He refused to have any part whatsoever in any revolt against constituted authority, which would but deluge the land with blood. On the contrary He taught them to fight the devil without and the evil within their own hearts—more intimate enemies than Rome—but this battle they refused.

As His divinity flashed through His humanity when He drove the traffickers from the temple courts, so once again more than

human power was manifested as He quietly but firmly marched the protesting disciples to the shore, put them in the boat, and peremptorily dismissed them with the order to go at once to the other side. In the same way He dismissed the crowd, who also were compelled against their will to disperse.

Jesus then retired to be alone with God. Once again men had failed Him. Will He after all be able to establish His spiritual kingdom in such hearts? Even His own disciples were so engrossed with the idea of an earthly kingdom and material prosperity that they could not grasp the spiritual idea. What hope was there therefore for the masses of the people? So at this crisis in His life Jesus spent the night in communion with God. As constantly throughout His life, so now He obtained physical rest and recuperation and renewed His courage and spiritual power by prayer. How often we neglect this most important means of obtaining courage and spiritual power!

THE NIGHT ON THE LAKE

But while Jesus was praying alone in the mountain, the disciples were having quite a different experience on the lake. They were provoked and impatient with Jesus for frustrating the effort to crown Him King. As they gave vent to their anger and disappointment, doubt began to come into their hearts. Was Jesus after all the King who was to come? This attitude of doubt and rebellion gave Satan just the opportunity he desired, and he determined to destroy them. A great storm was raised which buffeted them all night, and they were compelled to exert themselves to the utmost to keep from sinking. They soon forgot their rebellious doubts in the fear for their own personal safety.

Jesus knew from His place of prayer their peril. When He saw that they had reached their extremity, and through fear of imminent death their hearts were humbled and penitent, He arose and went to their rescue. He would not allow Satan to destroy them.

JESUS WALKS ON THE WATER

Night came on and He was there alone. Meanwhile the boat was far out on the lake, buffeted and tossed by the waves, the wind being adverse.⁷

But when He saw them distressed with rowing (for the wind was against them), towards morning He came towards them walking on the lake, as if intending to pass them. They saw Him walking on the water, and thinking He was a spirit they cried out; for they all saw Him and were terrified.⁸

"It is a spirit," they exclaimed, and they cried out with terror.

But instantly Jesus spoke to them, and said, "There is no danger; it is I; do not be afraid."

"Master," answered Peter, "if it is you, bid me come to you upon the water."

"Come," said Jesus.

Then Peter climbed down from the boat and walked upon the water to go to Him. But when he saw how strong the wind was he grew frightened, and beginning to sink he cried out,

"Master, save me."

Instantly Jesus stretched out His hand and caught hold of him, saying to him,

"O little faith, why did you doubt?"⁹

So they climbed into the boat, and the wind lulled; and the men on board fell down before Him and said,

"You are indeed God's Son."

And they were beside themselves with suppressed amazement. For they had not learned the lesson taught by the loaves, but their minds were dull.¹⁰

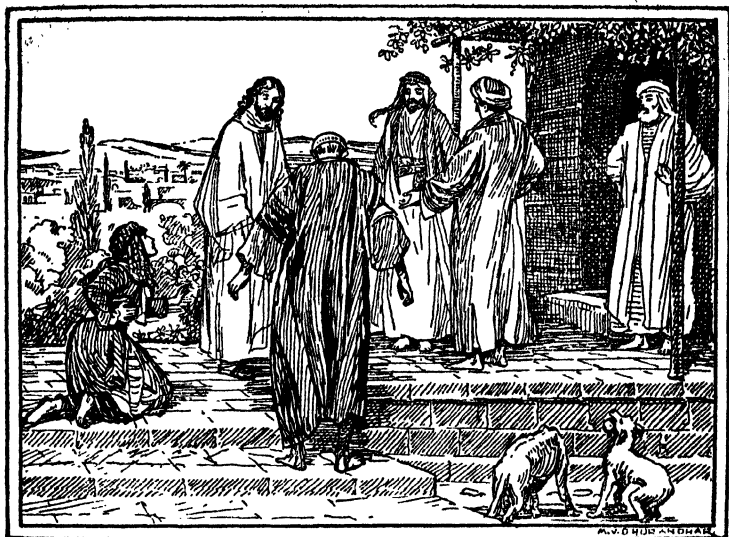
And in a moment the boat reached the shore at the point to which they were going.¹¹

In these wonderful events there are many lessons well worth pondering. The memory of that glorious day of teaching and healing and wonder-working should have filled the hearts of the disciples with faith and hope and love.

But in their abortive attempt to make Christ King, they had been bitterly disappointed. This disappointment had absorbed their thoughts. This attitude of mind had created for themselves trouble which soon materialized in the great storm. When the strong fishermen, accustomed to the sea, had toiled all the long weary night, and in the end had given up all for lost, then in their helplessness they turned to their Master. Why had they allowed themselves to be separated from Him? At that very moment Jesus appeared, walking on the water, and rescued them.

It was indeed marvellous that a man could reverse the order of nature and walk on the water. Peter in his revulsion of joy asked that he might walk to the Master, but as in self-satisfaction he took his eyes off Jesus, he saw only the great rolling waves threatening destruction; then faith gave way and he began to sink. Jesus rescued him, and as they entered the boat, the wind at once was quiet and they were at the place to which they were going.

Jesus thus demonstrated that He is the Lord of the material universe; He can multiply the bread at a word; the winds and the waves obey His command—all the forces of Nature are under His control. "Truly this is the Son of God," they said, and fell before Him in worship.



Barriers Broken Down

CHAPTER XV

JESUS was the Desire of All Nations. He came to save all peoples, and not merely the Jews. It is true that long centuries before, He had separated Israel from all other nations for the preservation of the knowledge of His truth.

But this very act was intended to make them the light of the world, and not that they should erect barriers between themselves and all others, decreeing that all on their side of the barrier were saved, and that all on the other side were irrevocably lost.

This was in fact the opposite of God's plan. He had said of His purpose in calling Israel,

"I have placed thee . . . as a light to the Nations, in order that thou mayest be a Saviour as far as the remotest parts of the earth."¹

But Israel had most miserably failed; they had not been willing that salvation should embrace the other nations of the earth, but had tried to confine it within their own narrow borders.

Jesus had come to break those barriers down and carry out God's original purpose of taking salvation to every nation, kindred, tongue and people. It is true that He chose His twelve apostles from Israel; but when He had trained and anointed them, He gave them His great commission that they were to go everywhere. Even during the brief three and one-half years of His ministry, He Himself made efforts for those outside of Israel and found time to go beyond the confines of the Holy Land.

The most important excursion of this nature was immediately after the crisis in Galilee when so many of His disciples had left Him.² The twelve were then in a better condition of mind to be taught the lesson that they were to be interested in working for others besides their own people.

Then He rose and left that place and went into the neighbourhood of Tyre and Sidon.

Here he entered a house and wished no one to know it, but He could not escape observation. Forthwith a woman whose little daughter was possessed by a foul spirit heard of Him, and came and flung herself at His feet. She was a Gentile woman, a Syrophœnician by nation; and again and again she begged Him to expel the demon from her daughter.³

She persistently cried out,

"Sir, Son of David, pity me; my daughter is cruelly harassed by a demon."

But he answered her not a word.⁴

Jesus did not share the intolerance of the Jews. The apparent reason for His coming to this place was to teach the twelve disciples that they were to come out of their exclusiveness and learn to work for other nations.

But He had to deal with them as they were. They considered this woman unworthy the services of their Master. He first took their attitude of exclusiveness, to show the contrast of the saving faith of this trusting Gentile woman with the scornful rejection of Himself by the Jews. It was a lesson they never forgot. In the years afterward the Holy Spirit said,

In that new creation there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, slave nor free man.

Jew and Gentile are on precisely the same footing; for the same Lord is Lord over all, and is infinitely kind to all who call upon Him for deliverance. For every one, without exception, who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.⁵

THE GENTILE WOMAN'S FAITH

After she had persisted in her importunity, The disciples interposed and begged Him saying: "Send her away because she keeps crying behind us."

"I have only been sent to the lost sheep of the house of Israel," He replied.

Then she came and threw herself at His feet and entreated Him.

"O Sir, help me," she said.

"It is not right," He said, "to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs."

"Be it so, Sir," she said, "for even the dogs eat the scraps which fall from their Master's tables."

"O woman," replied Jesus, "great is your faith; be it done to you as you desire."

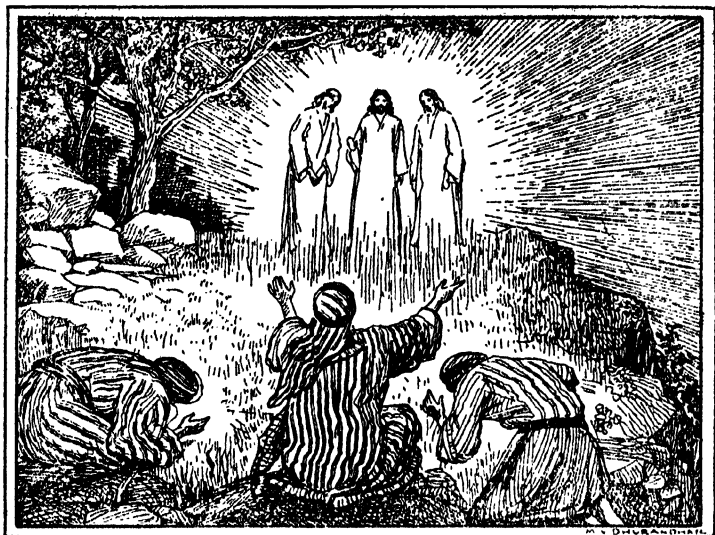
And from that moment her daughter was restored to health. ⁶

Jesus Himself here set the true position of Israel before their minds. God's plan for Israel included the whole world. From every nation those born again were by virtue of this second birth to become spiritual Israel. But owing to the failure of the Jews, the majority of this greater "Israel" were still "lost." Therefore the "lost sheep of the house of Israel" would include this Canaanite woman. In so far as their relation in a practical way to the salvation provided by God was concerned, they were a depressed class, because of Israel's failure. It may have been that Peter had in mind this incident when later writing "to God's own people scattered over the earth," he said, "For you were straying like lost sheep, but now you have come back to the Shepherd and Protector of your souls."⁷

The woman at once recognized the meaning of the Saviour as is shown by her reply, "Be it so, Sir, for even the dogs eat the scraps that fall from their Master's tables." She recognized that she belonged to the depressed class, depressed through the failure of the Jews, and claimed her right as such.

Jesus knew no caste. The word "untouchable" was not found in His vocabulary. The faith of this Gentile woman battered down the barriers erected by selfish men, and gained for her the same blessing as was received by others.

Jesus thus taught the twelve in a most striking way that He came to minister to and bless all nations. They showed in after life how well they had learned their lesson. The message of salvation was soon carried beyond the narrow confines of Judaism, and has conquered and comforted hearts in every nation. We almost forget now that for three and one-half years after the resurrection of Christ, all Christians were Jews only.



The Shadow of the Cross

CHAPTER XVI

THE Anointed of God had one paramount purpose in coming into the world. He healed men of their diseases; He taught them the deepest spiritual truths in the simplest ways until their hearts sang for joy; He cast out evil and foul spirits and made men free; but not one of these was the supreme reason for His coming.

His real reason for leaving heaven and coming to this world was to destroy SIN, the one hideous thing in the universe; the root from which springs all ignorance, selfishness, hypocrisy, pride, pain, sickness, and even death itself. The doing of all the gracious things recounted in the previous chapters was marvellous, but there was something better. All those things were subsidiary—the most important thing was to lay the axe to the root of the evil tree and purge it from the universe.

Jesus was to do this by dying for sin in man's stead. In the language of Scripture, He was to make atonement for the sinner. Every other thing He did was secondary. "He did not come so

much to preach a gospel, as to die, so that there might be a gospel to be preached." This is why His period of ministry was so short. This is the reason why He did not personally visit all nations of the world.

EARLY PREDICTIONS OF HIS DEATH

At the very beginning of His work after God, the Father, had so miraculously owned Him as His Son, and anointed Him for service, John the Baptist, the divinely appointed forerunner, had said, pointing to Jesus, "Look, that is the Lamb of God who is to take away the sin of the world!"¹

John referred here to the lambs slain daily at the altar of the Jewish temple. The sinner when convicted of sin brought a lamb, and laying his hands upon its head confessed his sin, and thus transferring his sin to the lamb, took its life. The blood was afterward taken into the temple and offered to God.² In this way the sacrificial blood had flowed all through the years, teaching men the dreadfulness of sin and the fearful cost of redemption.

But this blood of animals could never atone for the sin of a man, or cleanse away a single stain from his soul, or pay the price of his redemption.³ The Bible had made this very plain. This shed blood was but a symbol pointing forward to the great sacrifice that God Himself would eventually make which would be equal to the demands of the enormity of the guilt. God had promised that some day He would provide the Lamb. So when John the Baptist pointed to Jesus as the Lamb of God, the people understood what He meant, and Jesus accepted the office.

From the first, Jesus understood full well the purpose of His birth. In the very beginning of His ministry, at the cleansing of the temple, speaking of His death, He said, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up."⁴ Just before this He had said to His mother when He had changed the water to wine, "My hour is not yet come." Only a little later He tried to make the matter clear to Nicodemus, the Ruler of the Jews, when He said, "Just as Moses lifted high the serpent in the desert, so must the Son of man be lifted up, in order that every one who trusts in Him may have the Life of the Ages."⁵ Life, through the death of the Son of God, was His message.

But Israel was not in a condition of mind to receive such a message. They were looking for a regnant Messiah who was to rule the world, and not a suffering Saviour-King. Even the minds of the twelve disciples were so filled with this wrong conception that Jesus could not make them understand the real purpose of His coming, or fully prepare them for the sad events that were to happen on Calvary.

This idea of a suffering Messiah, who should "give His life as the redemption-price for many"⁶ was diametrically opposed to all their hopes, and at variance with all their ambitions. Yet it was the very truth of God, and the only hope for the human race.

When the multitude would have made Him King, after the miracle of the loaves, He plainly announced His coming death under the symbol of His flesh, the living bread, which He would give "for the life of the world."⁷ The multitudes mocked, and even many who had been His disciples went back and walked no more with Him.

But, before Jesus, in vivid distinctness, lay the path His feet must tread. He saw it all—the baptism of blood, the agony of Gethsemane, the anguish of Calvary. Now that it was all at hand, He felt that He must make His twelve disciples understand.

HIS FINAL EFFORTS TO EXPLAIN HIS APPROACHING DEATH

Accordingly they had left the thronging multitudes of the Jews for the Gentile cities of Tyre and Sidon. But as we have seen even there He had no leisure to teach them as He wished. So He went to the comparative quiet of Cæsarea Philippi in ~~Sidon~~ to help them to understand.

Before picturing to them the great trial before them He strengthened their faith in Him as the Son of God.

When he arrived in the neighbourhood of Cæsarea Philippi, Jesus questioned His disciples,

"Who do people say that the Son of man is?" He asked.

"Some say John the Baptist," they replied; "others, Elijah; others Jeremiah or one of the prophets."

"But you, who do you say that I am?" He asked again.

"You," replied Simon Peter, "are the Christ, the Son of the ever-living God."

"Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah," said Jesus; "for mere human nature has not revealed this to you, but My Father in Heaven. And I declare to you that you are Peter, (a stone) and that on this Rock (the confession) will I build my church, and the might of Hades shall not triumph over it."

No sooner had he raised their hopes by these statements than He apparently dashed them to the ground by the prediction of His death.

From this time Jesus began to explain to His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer much cruelty from the Elders, and the High Priests and the Scribes, and be put to death, and on the third day be raised to life again.

Then Peter took Him aside and began taking Him to task. "Master," he said, "God forbid; this will not be Your lot." But He turned and said to Peter, "Get behind me, Adversary; you are a hindrance to me, because your thoughts are not God's thoughts, but men's."⁸

The way of the cross, that is, the way of self-abnegation and self-denial, is not the way of man. So Satan here interposed and Jesus was hindered from fully explaining at this time the mystery of His approaching death.

JESUS IS TRANSFIGURED

But the time of the feast of the Passover at Jerusalem was approaching, and they were compelled to start on their long journey southward. Jesus not only was unable to fully explain the mystery of His coming death, but He was also robbed of the human sympathy His chosen disciples should have given Him to fortify Him for the great trial.

For this reason another wonderful thing happened. As they ~~led~~ ^{led}, God sent two glorified men from heaven to bring the comfort His disciples had failed to give.

While travelling towards Galilee they skirted the base of a mountain called Hermon. Leaving the rest of the disciples at the foot of the mountain, Jesus took Peter, James and John, the inner circle, who seemed to be able to come the closest to Him, up into the mountain and was transfigured before them.

There in their presence His form underwent a change, His face shone like the sun, and His raiment became as white as the light.⁹

And suddenly there were two men conversing with Him, who were Moses and Elijah. They came in glory and kept speaking about His death, which He was so soon to undergo in Jerusalem.

Now Peter and the others were weighed down with sleep; but, keeping themselves awake all through, they saw His glory, and the two men standing with Him; and when they were preparing to depart from Him, Peter said to Jesus,

"Rabbi, we are thankful to you that we are here. Let us put up three tents—one for You, one for Moses, and one for Elijah."

He did not know what he was saying. But while he was thus speaking, there came a cloud which spread over them; and they were awestruck when they had entered into the cloud. Then there came a voice from within the cloud:

"This is My Son, My Chosen One: listen to Him." After this voice had spoken, Jesus was found alone.¹⁰

Moses had been the great prophet and leader of Israel who, nearly fifteen hundred years before, had delivered them from Egyptian bondage, and had led them forty years through the wilderness. He had died on the borders of the Holy Land, but was buried by the angels, and no man was allowed to know his burial place.¹¹ Michael the Archangel was sent from heaven to resurrect him.

But Michael the Archangel, when contending with the Devil and arguing with him about the body of Moses, did not dare to pronounce judgment on him in abusive terms, but simply said, "The Lord rebuke you."¹²

Elijah was one of the most famous prophets of Israel who, nine hundred years before, in an age of almost universal apostasy, had called Israel to repentance. He had not died, but was honoured of God by translation, that is, he was taken to heaven without dying.

And it came to pass when Jehovah would take up Elijah by a whirlwind into heaven, that Elijah went with Elisha from Gilgal . . . And it came to pass, as they still went on, and talked, that behold, there appeared a chariot of fire, and horses of fire, which parted them both asunder; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven. And Elisha saw it and he cried, "My father, my father, the chariots of Israel and the horsemen thereof!"¹³

These two men from heaven not only strengthened Jesus with their human sympathy for His coming ordeal, but they, the one a resurrected saint, the other a translated one, represented the final triumph of the cross, when, at the second advent, which is to take place at the close of this evil age, an innumerable company of resurrected and translated saints will be taken over into the glad eternity beyond as the trophies of God's grace.¹⁴

On descending from the mountain they did not go at once to Jerusalem, but abode for a little time in Galilee. While waiting here Jesus the second time tried to explain the mystery of His approaching death.

As they were travelling about in Galilee, Jesus said to them, "The Son of man is about to be betrayed into the hands of men; they will put Him to death, but on the third day He will be raised to life again."

And they were exceedingly distressed.¹⁵

JESUS EAGER FOR THE CLOSING SCENES

At last the hour had come when He must take final leave of Galilee, the field of so much of His earnest labour. He was

about to go to Jerusalem for the closing scenes of His earthly life. He well knew what awaited Him there, but He did not shrink from the trial.

Now when the time drew near for Him to be received up again into Heaven, He proceeded with fixed purpose towards Jerusalem, and sent messengers before Him.¹⁶

He said, "I came to throw fire upon the earth, and what is my desire? Oh, that it were even now kindled!"¹⁷

As they neared the city, Jerusalem, Jesus seemed to enter the deeper shadow of the cross. So visibly did the coming sufferings take hold of Him that He walked apart from His disciples. They were amazed; never before had they seen their Master thus, and fear gripped their hearts. Then He called them to Him, and the third time told them of His approaching death and tried to explain its meaning.

They were still on the road going up to Jerusalem, and Jesus was walking ahead of them; they were full of wonder, and some though they followed, did so with fear. Then once more calling to Him the twelve, He began to tell them what was about to happen to Him.

"See," He said, "we are going up to Jerusalem, where the Son of man will be betrayed to the High Priests and the Scribes. They will condemn Him to death, and will hand Him over to the Gentiles; they will insult Him in cruel sport, spit on Him, scourge Him, and put Him to death; but on the third day He will rise to life again."¹⁸

But the hearts of the disciples were so dull of understanding that they believed not. The events that followed during that last week of the Saviour's life, which came rapidly one upon another, found them unprepared. At its end they were in the darkness of utter despair. These plainly foretold events were as great a surprise to them as if they had never been mentioned. But Jesus knew beforehand and was prepared.



The Resurrection of Lazarus

CHAPTER XVII

BECAUSE of the determination of the leaders of the Jews to put Jesus to death, He was teaching and healing across the Jordan from Jerusalem. While there the news was brought to Him that Lazarus, a young man He dearly loved, lay dangerously ill in Bethlehem, a village near Jerusalem. Lazarus had two sisters, Mary and Martha, and in their home Jesus had often been a welcome guest.

He could have gone to heal Lazarus at once, but He here saw the opportunity to perform the crowning miracle of His life. So He remained away in order that God might set His seal to His work and give the unbelieving Jews final, overwhelming evidence of His divinity. It was almost His last appeal to them.

In the meantime Lazarus died; the funeral ceremonies were completed and he was buried in the family tomb. Because of the high connection of the family of Lazarus, this funeral was attended by many of the leaders of the Jewish nation, among whom were deadly enemies of Jesus. Many of these remained with the bereaved

sisters and were still there when Jesus arrived the third day after his death. When He reached Bethany, Martha was the first to meet Him.

So Martha came and spoke to Jesus.

"Master, if You had been here," she said, "my brother would not have died. And even now I know that whatever You ask God for, God will give You."

"Your brother shall rise again," replied Jesus

"I know," said Martha, "that he will rise again at the resurrection, on the last day."

"I am the Resurrection and the Life," said Jesus; "he who believes in Me, even if he has died, he shall live; and every one who is living and is a believer in Me shall never, never die. Do you believe this?"

"Yes, Master," she replied; "I thoroughly believe that You are the Christ, the Son of God, who was to come into the world."

LAZARUS BROUGHT BACK TO LIFE

Mary then, when she came to Jesus and saw Him, fell at His feet and exclaimed,

"Master, if You had been here, my brother would not have died."

Seeing her weeping aloud, and the Jews in like manner weeping who had come with her, Jesus, curbing the strong emotion of His spirit, though deeply troubled, asked them,

"Where have you laid him?"

"Master, come and see," was their reply.

Jesus wept.

"See how dear He held him," said the Jews,

But others of them asked,

"Was this man who opened the blind man's eyes unable to prevent this man from dying?"

Jesus, however, again restraining His strong feeling, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone had been laid against the mouth of it.

"Take away the stone" said Jesus.

Martha the sister of the dead man, exclaimed,

"Master, by this time there is a foul smell; for it is three days since he died."

"Did I not promise you," replied Jesus, "that if you believe, you shall see the glory of God?"

So they removed the stone. Then Jesus lifted up His eyes and said,

"Father, I thank Thee that Thou hast heard Me. I know that Thou always hearest Me; but for the sake of the crowd standing round I have said this—that they may believe that Thou didst send Me."

After speaking thus, He called out in a loud voice,

"Lazarus, come out."

The dead man came out, his hands and feet wrapped in cloths, and his face wrapped round with a towel.

"Untie him," said Jesus, "and let him go free."¹

It had seemed to the disciples and to Mary and Martha that Jesus was callously indifferent to their terrible anxiety as Lazarus battled with death. But He had a greater blessing in store for them, and His way was best. If before Lazarus died Jesus had healed him, the priests and Pharisees would have denied its miraculous power. Or if Jesus had restored him to life as soon as he was dead, they would have said it was not death but only suspended animation.

But in order to prove conclusively that the miracle was a genuine manifestation of the power of God, Jesus had waited until Lazarus had been dead three days, and decay had already set in. Then He who is the Resurrection and the Life spake those simple words—"Lazarus, come out," and that voice pierced the ears of him who had been dead three days, and he lived again.

So we learn that in Christ is life. This He does not acquire from others; it is original and underived. His voice could awaken the dead because He is the Life-Giver. Martha's confession was demonstrated correct. "I thoroughly believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, who was to come into the world."

In bringing back Lazarus and others from the dead, our Lord has shown the fallacy of those erroneous beliefs which either picture the soul after death as transferred immediately to some happier sphere, or as "transmigrated" to some other body. Lazarus took up the thread of consciousness where he laid it down in the hour of death. He brought no word back concerning life beyond, thus demonstrating the truth so many times stated in the Bible that death is a dreamless sleep. Our hope for future bliss rests on the resurrection to immortality at the last day, and not, as some vainly hold, on either the immediate "promotion to glory" at death, or the transmigration of the soul. Both these false doctrines have one common origin, and that they are but a delusion is shown by the simple record of those raised from the dead by Jesus.

The verse, "Jesus wept," is the shortest verse in the Bible, but it is one of the most expressive. As He stood with the sorrowing sisters the weight of the grief of the ages settled down upon Him. He saw the sorrow of all who had lost, and who would still

lose loved ones, and His great heart of sympathy went out to them with a depth of feeling we can never fathom. He was a sympathetic Friend as well as Saviour.

The Jewish nation should have accepted this crowning evidence of the divinity of Jesus. Bringing a man back from the silent tomb after being dead three days should have settled the matter, but it did not. At the death of Lazarus some of the leaders of the Jewish nation had been profuse in their pretense of apparent sympathy for the bereaved ones, but now they were angry, and at once set about to destroy both Jesus and Lazarus.

CHRIST'S DEATH FOR OTHERS PREDICTED

Therefore the High Priests and the Pharisees held a meeting of the Sanhedrin.

"What steps are we taking?" they asked one another; "for this man is performing a great number of miracles. If we leave Him alone in this way, everybody will believe in him, and the Romans will come and blot out both our city and our nation."

But one of them named Caiaphas, being High Priest that year, said,

"You know nothing about it. You do not reflect that it is to your interest that one man should die for the people rather than the whole nation perish."

It was not as a mere man that he thus spoke. But being High Priest that year he was inspired to declare that Jesus was to die for the nation, and not for the nation only, but in order to unite into one body all the far-scattered children of God. So from that day forward they planned and schemed in order to put Him to death.²



The People Proclaim Him King

CHAPTER XVIII

THE first day of the last week of the earthly life of Jesus witnessed a remarkable demonstration. It was the custom of the Jews to have their kingly ride to their coronation on the famous white asses of Palestine. The ass is small and usually despised in India, but those of Palestine were quite different.

On that day great throngs were crowding the roads leading to the city. The annual feast of the Passover was about to be celebrated, and many thousands of pilgrims from the Holy Land, as also from many other lands, were converging on the city. It was like Mecca at the time of the *Haj*, or Benares at the time of the *pujas*.

Until this time Jesus had refused to be called King. This was not because He was not King in truth, but because He was not the kind of king they had expected. Now at the close of His earthly life the time had come for Him to declare Himself to be King in truth, and to receive the plaudits of the people.

As Jesus drew near to the Mount of Olives He gave the order for His disciples to bring Him one of the royal asses, on which no man had ever before sat. They then put their garments on the colt, and Jesus began His triumphant ride into the city of David.

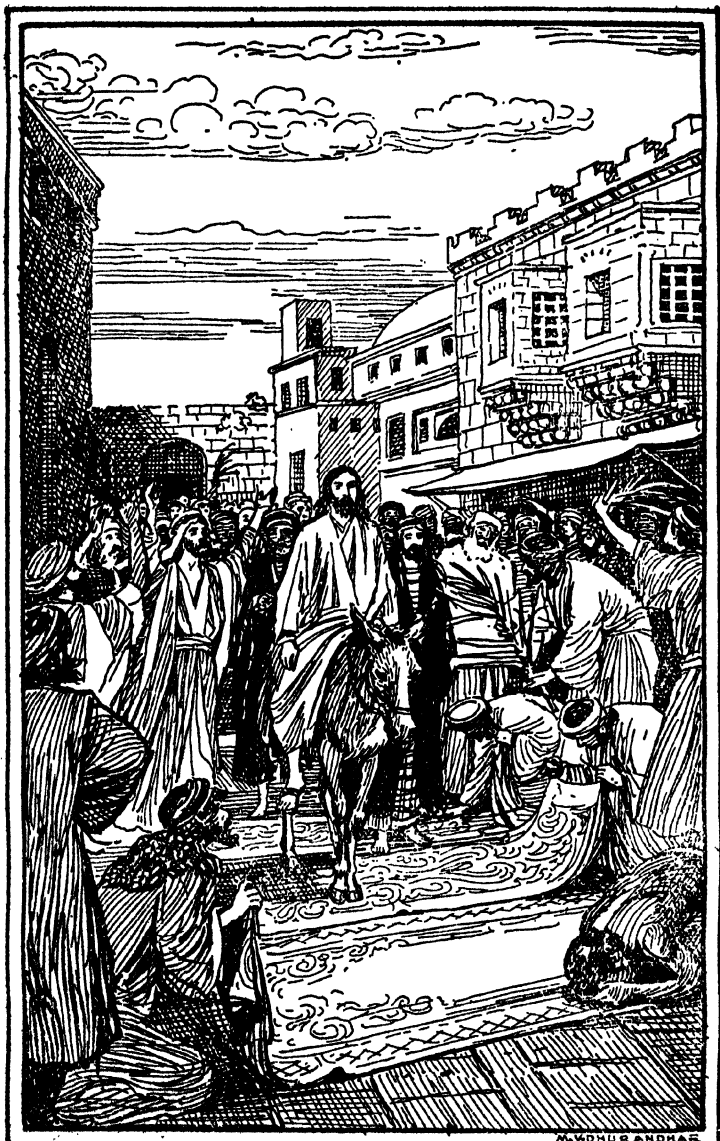
The pent-up feelings of this emotional people, who had been long expecting the Messiah, at last found expression. As Jesus seated Himself on the colt, a great shout arose from the throng. They believed that the happy hour of their deliverance had at last arrived and were frantic with joy as they proclaimed Jesus, God's Anointed King. They carpeted the road before Him with their garments and with branches broken from near-by trees. With shouts of "God save the Son of David" and songs of triumph they waved joyously before Him their palm branches, the symbol of royalty among the Jews.¹

As they approached the city the crowd rapidly increased. Such a happy, joyous throng had not entered the city since the days of the ancient kings. But even the exultation of those days was not equal to this day. Angels of God were present, and more than human power urged the people on.

How different this entry of the King of Truth into Jerusalem from the ordinary entry of triumphant earthly kings! Instead of cowering captives bound to chariot wheels, the lame whom He had restored, leaped for joy; the dumb whose tongues He had loosed, sang His praises; and the lepers whom He had healed, spread their now undefiled garments before Him with exceeding gladness.

As they neared Jerusalem the Pharisees who had bitterly opposed Jesus all through His ministry, tried to restrain the crowd, but in vain. They then asked Jesus to rebuke the multitude, for they knew that He had never before allowed Himself to be treated as an earthly king. "I tell you," He replied, "that if they became silent, the very stones would cry out."² The ancient prophets had by inspiration of God foretold this very scene, together with the exact words the people would triumphantly shout.³ If no human beings had been found to do this, then Almighty God would have caused the very stones to cry out, for every prophecy of His word must be fulfilled.

Although Jesus knew that He was not riding to an earthly throne and kingdom, but to His death, still He was really a Saviour-King, and after the sorrowful scenes of the next few days were long in the past, many who had taken part in this great scene of rejoicing would remember all that He had said, and then in truth crown Him as Saviour-King of their hearts and lives. And this work would continue all through the centuries until He would at His second advent return as King of kings and Lord of lords.⁴ And to be Ruler of this larger multitude would be of greater importance than to be the earthly king of a small nation like the Jews.



THE TRIUMPHAL ENTRY INTO JERUSALEM

JESUS WEPT OVER JERUSALEM

On the brow of the hill overlooking Jerusalem the procession paused as the rays of the setting sun lighted up the pure white marble of the massive temple building, tipped with its trimmings of gold and silver—the finished product of the best artists of the known world. It was a scene of rare beauty which hushed instantly the noisy acclamations of the great throng.

But Jesus did not share the feelings of pride and admiration of those accompanying Him. Instead, a cloud of sorrow overshadowed Him and He burst into tears, shaken with grief inexpressible. He was not weeping in anticipation of His own sufferings, although He knew them full well, but because of the glorious destiny that might have been. This city might have stood forever, the centre of salvation and culture for the whole world; this temple might have remained the house of prayer for all peoples, even for those in the remotest parts of the earth. The record says;

When He came into full view of the city, He wept aloud over it, and exclaimed,

"O that at this time thou hadst known—yes even thou—what makes peace possible! But now it is hid from thine eyes. For the time is coming upon thee when thy foes will throw up around thee earthworks and a wall, investing thee and hemming thee in on every side. And they will dash thee to the ground and thy children within thee and will not leave one stone upon another within thee; because thou hast not recognized the time of thy visitation."⁵

As they came to the gates of the temple the threatening attitude of the great company of priests and leaders finally silenced the multitude. In their hardness of heart, and in their pride, they pretended that such noisy demonstration did not become the sacred precincts of the temple.

But when the voices of the adults were hushed by the hypocritical rulers, the children took up the refrain and welcomed the King to His temple. Jesus once more cleansed the temple courts from the unholy traffickers as He had done at the beginning of His ministry. Then the sick and suffering crowded in and were healed.

THE SICK AND CRIPPLED HEALED

Entering the temple Jesus drove out all who were buying and selling there, and overturned the money-changers' tables and the seats of the pigeon-dealers.

"It is written," He said, "'My house shall be called the House of Prayer,' but you are making it a robbers' cave."

And the blind and the lame came to him in the temple, and He cured them.⁶

Now at last the temple was fulfilling the purpose that Jehovah had in mind when He established it. Poor, lost, sick, suffering humanity were being ministered to. This ministry of love, rather than the pomp of elaborate ritual or solemn ceremony, exemplifies heaven's true ideal of worship. The glory of such a ministry far outshines any earthly pageant. It was of this time that the ancient prophet Haggai had spoken.

And the Desire of All Nations shall come: (to the Temple) and I will fill this house with glory, saith the Lord of Hosts. The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, saith the Lord of hosts. The glory of this latter house shall be greater than of the former, saith the Lord of hosts: and in this place will I give peace, saith the Lord of hosts.⁷

The peace and holy joy that now permeated the temple courts were the exact fulfillment of this prophecy. All this time the children were crowding round Jesus, waving their palm branches and shouting their songs of praise. Jesus called attention to the fact that this also was but the fulfillment of another ancient prophecy.

"Do you hear," they asked him, "what these children are saying?"

"Yes," He replied; "have you never read, 'Out of the mouths of infants and of babes at the breast Thou hast brought forth the praise which is due?' "⁸

These are but a few of the ancient prophecies of the Messiah which were fulfilled in the life of Jesus. It is worthy of serious consideration that all the important details of His life, from His miraculous birth in Bethlehem, to its close, were accurately foretold by the ancient prophets. This has been true of no other man who has ever lived on earth. No other man dare bring his life to such a test. Jesus is the Sent of God, the Saviour-King of the world, and that no sincere soul need doubt His divinity, God has given in innumerable ways these unimpeachable testimonies.



The Memorial Service Instituted

CHAPTER XIX

IT was now the last night, that night in which Jesus was betrayed into the hands of His enemies by one of His own disciples. According to the custom of the Jews the Pass-over supper had been prepared. This supper was an annual festival which had been celebrated every year since the deliverance of their ancestors from Egyptian bondage. At that time a destroying angel had "passed over" every house that had the sprinkled blood on the door-post; but had slain the eldest child in every home in Egypt that was without the blood on the lintel. During all the years on the evening of the anniversary of that deliverance, the Jews had slain a lamb, and had eaten it with unleavened bread and unfermented wine in commemoration of this event.¹

On this night, in the year of the betrayal, a Thursday evening, the table was ready on which was the lamb, the unleavened bread, and the unfermented wine. All the disciples had bathed and had put on clean clothes as was the Jewish custom. But in spite of

these outward preparations their hearts were not right with God. Envy, jealousy, alienation, and strife as to which should be the greatest, filled their hearts. Jesus knew that the time had at last come to which He had been looking forward. The pain of His great suffering was already torturing His heart. But even so His thoughts were not of Himself but for His disciples whom He was about to leave, and who had failed even yet to fully grasp the fundamental truths of His kingdom. How could He cleanse their hearts so that they might be strengthened for the coming trial?

THE ORDINANCE OF HUMILITY AND WASHING, INSTITUTED

He found an answer in a very simple and humble ceremony. It was the usual practice of the Jews to provide a servant to wash the feet of guests. As they entered the room their sandals were removed and the dust of the highway was washed away. But there was no servant here, and in their pride not one of the disciples would perform the menial task. So Jesus laid aside His outer garment, girded Himself with a towel, took basins and water and proceeded to wash their feet Himself. This simple act of humility had a most wonderful effect on the hearts of the disciples. As the water fell from the Master's hands on their feet, the waters of divine grace washed away the jealousy and envy from their hearts. When Jesus had finished the task He said that now they were all clean, both in body and soul, excepting Judas.

But He not only performed this act of humility Himself, He at the same time commanded that His church should make this act of washing the preparatory service for taking the sacrament throughout all the ages to come. He well knew that pride and self-seeking lay at the bottom of the alienation and jealousy in the world. The same thing that troubled the hearts of those disciples would trouble His church through all the centuries to come. So this ordinance of humility and of washing, which had worked so effectively in the hearts of the disciples, He consecrated as a permanent ordinance in the Christian church, always to precede and prepare for the sacrament service. "If I then, your Master and Rabbi, have washed your feet, it is also your duty to wash one another's feet. For I have set you an example in order that you may do what I have done to you. In most solemn truth I tell you that a servant is not superior to his master, nor is a messenger superior to him who sent him. If you know all this, blessed are you if you act accordingly."²

Jesus immediately turned to the bread and wine of the Passover supper, and taking first the bread and breaking it, He said "This is my body which is about to be broken for you. Do this in memory of me." In like manner He took the wine and after He

had Himself tasted, gave to them saying, 'This cup is the New Covenant; of which My blood is the pledge. Do this, every time that you drink it, in memory of Me. For every time that you eat this bread and drink from the cup, you are proclaiming the Lord's death—until He returns.'³

This solemn scene, kept ever fresh in the memory of Christians by the sacrament service, shows clearly that Jesus understood beforehand the full meaning of His approaching death. His body was broken and His blood spilled for them. This death was to redeem them and put them on vantage ground so that pardon would be theirs and the power of sin would be broken in their lives.

THE FUTURE TRIUMPH FORETOLD

But even under the darkest shadow of the cross the vision of Jesus looked forward to that day when He should stand in triumph with all His redeemed around Him. "I tell you that I will never again take the produce of the vine till that day when I shall drink the new wine with you in my Father's kingdom."⁴ He was about to die that there might be a gospel to be preached. Through this gospel hearts would be subdued and purified, and in the distant future He would gather all such and drink the fruit of the vine with them in His eternal kingdom.

During that last Passover supper Jesus exposed Judas, one of the twelve, before all the disciples. He knew when He chose Judas in the beginning just what he would do, and during all His ministry He bore with him. Jesus had never spoken one unkind word to Judas or manifested impatience of spirit. To begin with, Judas was the best educated, and most clever of the twelve. But all through the three and one-half years of association with Jesus he had resisted the Master's transforming grace, and his character had degenerated. His experience was in striking contrast to that of the more impulsive John. John was transformed by that same grace and became one of the most accomplished of the disciples.

After the feast at Simon's house in honour of the resurrection of Lazarus, Judas had gone secretly to the High Priest and had offered for money to betray Jesus into their hands. They agreed gladly and weighed into his hand thirty pieces of silver, the current price of a slave.⁵ Jesus knew all this would happen, and had told the disciples about it on several occasions.

At the last supper He had announced that one of the twelve would betray Him—not simply to expose the traitor; for Jesus had always treated Judas like the rest;—but in order that they might afterwards remember that He had known all beforehand.⁶



Gethsemane

CHAPTER XX

AFTER his exposure before the twelve, Judas left the disciples and went directly to the Chief Priests. Because they feared the people they were watching for an opportunity to take Jesus when He was alone. Judas now suggested that they take Him at midnight after He had retired to pray in a garden called Gethsemane. So soldiers were given Judas, and the High Priest sent out messengers calling for the assembling of the Sanhedrin, the Jewish Ecclesiastical High Court.

In the meantime Jesus had been teaching the disciples many important lessons. At last He arose from the table and they passed out of the city to spend the night in the Garden. It was the night of the full moon, and as they walked out of the city Jesus continued His efforts to prepare them for what was coming.

As He approached the Garden the sins of the world began to settle upon Him. His disciples were much troubled.

Then Jesus said to them,

"All of you are about to stumble and fall, for it is written, 'I will strike down the Shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered in all directions.' But after I have risen to life again I will go before you into Galilee."

"All may stumble and fall," said Peter, "yet I never will."

"I solemnly tell you," replied Jesus, "that today—this night—before the cock crows twice, you yourself will three times disown me."

"Even if I must die with You," declared Peter again and again, "I will never disown You."

In like manner protested also all the disciples.¹

VICARIOUS SUFFERING

At last the time had come for God the Father to lay on His Son the sin of the world. An ancient prophet had said that He would be 'numbered with the transgressors.'² "God has made Him who knew nothing of sin to be sin for us, in order that in Him we may become the righteousness of God."³ The sins of one man could not be laid on another, nor could one man die in another's stead. The death of one man for another could not cancel the other's guilt, but because Jesus, the Sent of God, is the Source of all life, and because it is through Him that we all exist, He alone was able to take a human body and taste death for every man. Had he not, as the Son of God, been the Lord of all nature, including mankind, He could not have received in His own soul the weight of man's sin.

But He was the Son of God, the Creator of all things "visible and invisible," "The effulgence of God's glory, the very image of His substance, upholding all things by the word of His power,"⁴ and for this reason He could stoop to earth and lift the burden of man's sin off his heart and bear its tremendous weight on His own until it crushed His very life.

THE DIVINE-HUMAN SUPPLIANT

So they came to a place called Gethsemane. There He said to His disciples,

"Sit down here till I have prayed."

Then He took with Him Peter and James and John, and began to be full of terror and distress, and He said to them,

"My heart is oppressed with anguish to the very point of death; wait here and keep awake."

Going forward a short distance, He threw Himself upon His face and prayed repeatedly that, if it was possible, He might be spared that time of agony, and He said,

"Abba! my Father! all things are possible for Thee: take this cup of suffering away from me: and yet not what I desire, but what Thou desirest." ⁵

"He went a little distance from them—not so far but that they could both see and hear Him—and fell prostrate upon the ground. He felt that by sin He was being separated from His Father. The gulf was so broad, so black, so deep that His spirit shuddered before it. This agony He must not exert His divine power to escape. As man He must suffer the consequences of man's sin. As man He must endure the wrath of God against transgression.

"As Christ felt His unity with the Father broken up, He feared that in His human nature He would be unable to endure the coming conflict with the powers of darkness. In the wilderness of temptation the destiny of the human race had been at stake. Christ was then conqueror. Now the tempter, (Satan) had come for the last fearful struggle. . . . Everything was at stake with him. . . . With the issues of the conflict before Him, Christ's soul was filled with dread of separation from God."—*"The Desire of Ages,"* pp. 686, 687.

The conflict was terrible. The Son of man was paying the price for the redemption of the human soul. Twice He shrank from the ordeal, crying, "O Father! if it be possible let this cup pass away from me." The fate of the human race was hanging in the balance. Would the Son of God persevere and meet the demands of the broken law, or would He wipe the bloody sweat from His brow, and return to heaven, leaving guilty, ungrateful man to perish?

He staggered back the third time to the scene of His struggles and, seeing the power of sin, the hopeless, helpless condition of the doomed world, and the awful impending fate that would be their final lot, He decided, and said, "My Father, if this (cup) can not pass away, except I drink it, Thy will be done." ⁶ He then drank the cup poisoned with the virus of our sins, and fell fainting to the ground.

In that hour of agony there was no human heart to sympathize with Him, no human arm to lift Him in pity and no sympathetic hand to wipe the bloody sweat from His brow or to minister to Him. But God, the Father, did not forsake Him. A powerful angel was sent from heaven, not to take the cup from the divine-human Suppliant, but to strengthen Him to drink it and to bring the assurance of the Father's undying sympathy and love.

When He rose from His prayer and came to His disciples, He found them sleeping for sorrow.

"Why are you sleeping?" He said, "stand up, and pray that you may not come into temptation." ⁷

THE BETRAYAL

While He was still speaking, there came a crowd with Judas at their head who went up to Jesus and, as prearranged, kissed Him.

Jesus immediately asked the mob twice whom they were seeking, and each time they fell helpless to the ground. One would think that this manifestation of supernatural power would have turned them from their purpose, but they arose and bound Him.⁸

It was then that Peter drew his sword and cut off the ear of one of them. Jesus saying, "Permit me thus far," released his hand from the soldier's grasp and touched the severed ear and healed it. Then the disciples all forsook Him and fled in panic, and the mob dragged Jesus to the preliminary investigation before the chief priests.

THE PRELIMINARY INVESTIGATION BEFORE ANNAS AND CAIAPHAS

Jesus was first taken to Annas—father-in-law to the High Priest—who seems to have occupied a predominant place among the Jews at that time. Annas, apparently having made no headway, sent Jesus bound to Caiaphas, the High Priest.

In order to make a pretense of condemning the Sinless One, the chief priests tried to bring two charges against Him—one of blasphemy, that the Jews might condemn Him, the other, of sedition, that the Romans might condemn Him. Annas and Caiaphas both tried to prove the latter accusation. If the Romans could be convinced that Jesus was building up a secret society in the establishment of the "Kingdom of Heaven," the Romans themselves would put Him to death.

But Jesus read their purpose like an open book. He denied having any secrets, declaring His work to have been done in the noontide light, in striking contrast with their own cowardly attempt to arrest and condemn Him in the midnight hours when those who would have championed His cause were sleeping.⁹

Jesus' calm reply, coming from a pure and sinless heart, unmasked the hypocrisy of Annas and Caiaphas, and exposed their wicked purpose. These men had utterly failed and, lest Jesus say something more that might cause a revulsion in the feelings of the mob, they sent Him bound to where a hastily assembled meeting of the Jewish Sanhedrin was waiting. Here they tried to condemn Him on the charge of blasphemy. They were in desperate straits, for if they failed on this point their farce of a trial would be exposed. According to Jewish law no night meeting of the Sanhedrin was legal but, impatient of delay, they held a preliminary trial in the early morning.

THE PRELIMINARY TRIAL BEFORE THE SANHEDRIN AT NIGHT

To this hastily gathered night meeting of the Sanhedrin, they brought numerous false witnesses. Some tried to create prejudice by saying that Jesus had threatened to destroy the Jewish temple. But their testimony was so conflicting and contradictory that the High Priest, the presiding Judge, finally, in desperation cried out to Jesus, who had been calmly silent through it all,

"In the name of the ever-living God I now put you on your oath. Tell us whether you are the Christ, the Son of God."

"I am He," replied Jesus, "but I tell you that, later on, you will see the Son of man sitting at the right hand of Omnipotence, and coming on the clouds of the sky."

The High Priest in affected horror called this blasphemy, and tearing his robes said to the Council, "What need have we of witnesses after that? You all heard His impious words, What is your judgment?" Then with one voice they condemned Him as deserving of death.¹⁰

Jesus was calm and dignified all through the ordeal. His enemies seemed about to confound themselves. They were madened as they became entangled in their own conflicting testimony. But He was silent through it all and only gave answer when the High Priest put Him on oath demanding that He affirm or deny that He was the Son of God. After passing sentence they waited for daylight to confirm it.

PETER'S REPENTANCE AND JUDAS' REMORSE

It was during this trial that Peter heard the cock crow the second time. He had just denied his Lord the third time.

No sooner had he spoken than a cock crowed. The Master turned and looked on Peter; and Peter recollected the Master's words, how He had said to him.

"This very day, before the cock crows, you will disown me three times."

And he went out and wept aloud bitterly.¹¹

During these moments of waiting for daylight, Judas, stricken with remorse, returned to the chief priests and offered to give back the thirty pieces of betrayal money, saying, "I have sinned, in betraying to death one who is innocent." They coldly replied, "What does that matter to us? it is your business." Then, flinging the money into the Sanctuary, he went out and hanged himself.¹²

Like so many other things in the life of Jesus, this experience of Judas is typical of many human experiences. Sin with its bewitching enticement lures us to evil. Before the overt act is com-

mitted Satan seems to grip the mind with an intoxicating desire that overwhelms us. But the moment the desire is yielded to there is a revulsion of feeling and we find that the apparently pleasant fruit that seemed so desirable, has turned to ashes on our lips. Judas experienced all this, and, finding no place for repentance, went out into the grey dawn of that early morning and took his own life.

Both Judas and Peter had failed their Lord. Both had yielded to the enemy and trembled on the brink of the awful abyss of final impenitence. Judas resisted the utmost effort of the Master to rescue him, and from the Memorial Supper went out "into the night"—that night that knows no morning. But the loving look of the Master caught Peter on the brink of that same abyss and turned him back. Through bitter weeping and sincere repentance he found the way through to pardon and peace, and became one of the founders of the Christian church. In the contrasted experiences of these two first disciples each can find admonition and warning for his own soul. May the loving look of the Master tip the scale on the right side in the hour of deadly peril.

THE LEGAL TRIAL BY DAY BEFORE THE SANHEDRIN

As soon as it was day, the whole body of the Elders, both High Priests and Scribes, assembled. Then He was brought into their Sanhedrin, and they asked Him,

"Are you the Christ? Tell us?"

"If I tell you," He replied, "You will certainly not believe; and if I ask you questions, you will certainly not answer, nor release me. But from this time forward, the Son of Man will be seated at the right hand of God's omnipotence."

Thereupon they cried out with one voice,

"You, then, are the Son of God?"

"It is as you say," He answered,—*"I am He."*

"What need have we of further evidence," they said; "for we ourselves have heard it from his own lips."¹³

Thus the Jewish authorities had made their fourth abortive attempt to condemn the Uncondemned. It was a sham trial, one of the grossest miscarriages of justice in the history of the world. All the way through the priests were fearful that they would fail. The calm silence of Jesus to all the charges, and His innocent, noble bearing, disconcerted them beyond measure as their false witnesses one after the other discredited themselves. With imminent failure staring them in the face, in spite of their secret trial in the silent hours of the night, the High Priest in desperation demanded again of Jesus on oath if He was the Son of God. Once more He had been silent until put on oath. This had been clearly foretold by the ancient Prophet.

He was oppressed, yet when He was afflicted He opened not His mouth; as a lamb that is led to the slaughter and as a sheep that before its shearers is dumb, so He opened not His mouth.

By oppression and judgment (a judicial crime) He was taken away; and as for His generation, who among them considered that He was cut off out of the land of the living for the transgression of my people to whom the stroke was due?¹⁴

But when Jesus was put on oath concerning the truth as to whether He were the Son of God, or not, silence would have been denial, so He declared that He was. Then the verdict was passed, "He deserves to die." The issue was plain, Jesus of Nazareth was condemned solely because He was the Son of God.

When they finally reached the verdict pandemonium broke loose. The dignified Elders of Israel were worse than the rabble in the court at night. Possessed by Satanic fury they used those weapons which in all ages are used to silence so-called heretics—ill-treatment, outrage, abuse, and violence.

Forgetting their dignity priests and rulers vied with one another in heaping abuse and vile epithets on Jesus. Throwing a garment over His head they struck Him and said, 'Prove to us that you are a prophet, by telling us who it was that struck you.' When the garment was removed, one degraded wretch spat in His face.¹⁵

Had it not been for the Gentile Roman soldiers, they would have torn Christ in pieces. But the Roman soldiers intervened, declaring that under Roman law no man could be punished until pronounced guilty after an open and fair trial, and that further they were infringing the Roman law in pronouncing Jesus worthy of death. For the Romans had taken away that right from the Jews. So it was decided to take Jesus to the Roman Governor, Pilate.



The Uncondemned Condemned

CHAPTER XXI

WE now come to a Roman court. On the judgment seat is Pilate—the representative of all the majesty and power of the mighty Roman Empire. Supporting him are the soldiers. Before him stands Jesus, the Uncondemned, bound a prisoner.

The hall is fast filling with spectators. The Sanhedrin members stand outside, for it is the holy festival day, and entrance to the Gentile courtroom would bring ceremonial defilement. Thus those whose hearts were stained with murder and evil thoughts were meticulously careful concerning ceremonial defilement. Of what real value is such religion?

Pilate had been hastily called from his bed-chamber at an early hour, for the Jews were anxious to complete their work before the multitudes who loved and revered Jesus were astir. He turned with impatience to scan the face of the supposed criminal, determined to make a quick decision, for He knew it must be someone whom the Jewish authorities desired to punish with haste.

Pilate had had long experience in dealing with criminals and could read their character at a glance. As his eyes rested on the pure, calm face of Jesus he saw no sign of guilt, no expression of fear, no boldness or defiance. The words of severe condemnation died on his lips, and he turned to the Jews to demand the charges. These hypocritical, wicked leaders were disconcerted, as they had expected a speedy confirmation of their sentence without careful inquiry. Their charge of alleged blasphemy would have no weight with Pilate. In their desperation they saw the ground crumbling beneath their feet. Pilate read their secret purpose and tried to release Jesus. Weak and vacillating though he was, he at first refused to be a party to the judicial murder. When he saw how inflexible the Jewish rulers were in their determination, he tried one plan after another to change them and deliver Jesus; but with each effort he lessened his ability to overcome their stubborn wills.

THE PRELIMINARY INVESTIGATION BEFORE PILATE

When Pilate asked the Jews concerning the charge against Jesus, they told Him that they had already tried Him and found Him guilty. "Take Him then yourselves and judge Him," was the reply. This compelled them to admit their subjection to Rome, by acknowledging that they no longer had the right to pass the death penalty. In order to get a quick decision they told Pilate that Jesus claimed to be a king.¹

SECOND EXAMINATION BY PILATE

At once Pilate called Jesus aside and asked Him if He were really a king. Jesus said that He had come to bear witness to the truth concerning that other world which transcends all earthly kingdoms. His was no Jewish kingdom but one that appealed to all men. Its attraction would find response in every heart that had affinity with the truth.

"My kingdom," He replied, "does not belong to this world. If my kingdom did belong to this world, my subjects would have resolutely fought to save me from being delivered up to the Jews. But, as a matter of fact, my kingdom has not this origin. . . . I am a King. For this purpose I was born and for this purpose I have come into the world—to give testimony for the truth. Everyone who is a friend of the truth listens to my voice."

"What is truth," asked Pilate, impressed beyond measure, but like so many others in this world when under conviction, he did not wait for an answer, but went out and a second time tried in vain to release Jesus.²

PILATE EXAMINES JESUS A THIRD TIME

More alarmed than ever by the persistence of the Jews, he re-entered the Praetorium and once more questioned Jesus, who now answered not a word. Irritated by His silence, Pilate reminded Jesus of the power of life or death that was in his hands. Jesus answered, "You would have had no power whatever over me, had it not been granted you from above. On that account he who has delivered me up to you is more guilty than you are."³

PILATE TRIES A THIRD TIME TO RELEASE JESUS

On hearing this Pilate desired all the more to release Him, but the priests, growing bolder by his hesitation, violently insisted on condemnation. In their clamour they mentioned that Jesus was from Galilee. Galilee was under the jurisdiction of another king, Herod by name, who was in Jerusalem at that time. Pilate thought to shirk his responsibility by remitting the case to Herod.

JESUS HAS TRIAL BEFORE KING HEROD

To Herod the sight of Jesus was a great gratification, because he had heard much about him, and had been long wanting to see Him. He hoped also to see some miracle performed by Him and asked Him many questions, but Jesus gave him no reply. He had no word for the curious questioning of the man who had refused to repent at the rebuke of John the Baptist, the fore-runner, but who had slain him. Meanwhile the chief priests and the scribes were standing by vehemently accusing Him. In the end, laughing to scorn the claims of Jesus, Herod (and his soldiers with him) made sport of Him, dressed Him in a gorgeous costume and sent Him back to Pilate. On that very day Herod and Pilate became friends again, for they had been for some time at bitter enmity.⁴

PILATE FINALLY PASSES SENTENCE OF DEATH

Pilate brought Jesus out, and sat down on the judge's seat in a Court called the Pavement. It was on the day of preparation for the Passover.

While he was sitting on the tribunal, a message came to him from his wife.

"Have nothing to do with that innocent man," she said, "for during the night I have suffered terribly in a dream through Him."⁵

The chief priests, however, and the elders, had urged the crowd (while Pilate's attention was distracted by the message from his wife) to ask for Barabbas, a condemned criminal, and to



THE TRIAL BEFORE THE SANHEDRIN

demand the death of Jesus. So when the Governor, a second time asked them,

"Which of the two shall I release to you?"—they cried, "Barabba!"

"What then," said Pilate, "shall I do with Jesus, the so-called Christ?"

With one voice they shouted,

"Let Him be crucified!"

"Why, what crime has He committed?" asked Pilate.

But they kept on furiously shouting,

"Let Him be crucified!"

So when he saw that he could gain nothing, but that on the contrary there was a riot threatening, he called for water and washed his hands in sight of them all, saying,

"I am not responsible for this murder; you must answer for it."

"His blood," replied all the people, "be on us and on our children."⁶

The people made their choice. "Not this man but Barabbas." Satan became their ruler and he—Satan—whom Barabbas typified, would make them feel his cruel hand as long as time should last. The prayer "His blood be on us, and our children," was registered in heaven. Terribly was it fulfilled in the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus in A.D. 70 when Calvary Hill, where they crucified Jesus, was studded with a forest of crosses on which the Romans hung them and their children. Terribly has it been fulfilled all through the centuries since, as the Jewish race, as a race, has been despised and harassed, and driven from country to country. Most terrible of all will be the punishment of the great Judgment day that is surely coming. Likewise must each one make his choice and accept the consequences. Which will you choose?

THE CROWN OF THORNS—FIT SYMBOL OF THE BURDEN OF THE SIN-CURSED EARTH

Then he released Barabbas to them, but Jesus he ordered to be scourged, and gave Him up to be crucified.

Then the Governor's soldiers took Jesus into the Praetorium, and called together the whole battalion to make sport of Him. Stripping off His garments, they put on Him a general's short crimson cloak. They twisted a wreath of thorny twigs and put it on His head, and they put a scepter of cane in His right hand, and kneeling to Him they shouted in mockery,

"Long live the King of the Jews!"

Then they spat upon Him, and taking the cane they repeatedly struck Him on the head with it. At last, having finished their sport, they took off the cloak, clothed Him again with His own garments, and led Him away for crucifixion.⁷

JESUS TAKEN TO GOLGOTHA AND CRUCIFIED

Going out they met a Cyrenaen named Simon; whom they compelled to carry His cross, and so they came to a place called Golgotha, which means, "Skullground." Here they gave Him a mixture of wine and gall to drink, but having tasted it He refused to drink it.

After crucifying Him, they divided His garments among them by lot, (as foretold by Prophets) and sat down there on guard. Over His head they placed a written statement of the charge against Him:

"THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS"

At the same time two robbers were crucified with Him, one at His right hand and the other at His left.

And the passers-by reviled Him. They shook their heads at Him and said,

"You who would pull down the Sanctuary and build a new one within three days, save yourself. If you are God's Son, come down from the cross."

In like manner the High Priests also, together with the Scribes and the Elders, taunted Him.

"He saved others," they said, "Himself He cannot save! He is the King of Israel! Let Him now come down from the cross, and we will believe in Him. His trust is in God: let God deliver Him now, if He will have Him; for He said, 'I am God's Son.'"⁸

Even at such a time while He "patiently endured the cross, looking with contempt upon its shame," and bore without murmur "such hostility directed against Him by sinners,"⁹ He prayed with unparalleled self forgetfulness, "Father, forgive them, 'or they know not what they are doing.'"¹⁰ He did not say "I forgive you." With no thought for Himself, He realized their hopeless condition as they sinned against light and knowledge and truth.

THE PENITENT THIEF

And one of the malefactors that were hanged railed on Him, saying, Art not thou the Christ? Save thyself and us. But the other answered, and rebuking him said, Dost thou not even fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation?

And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds; but this man hath done nothing amiss. And he said, "Jesus remember me when Thou comest in Thy kingdom." And He said unto him, "Verily I say unto thee today shalt thou be with me in Paradise."¹¹

Blinded by preconceived opinions some have read into this passage that which was not placed there by the Holy Spirit. It was not the request of the dying thief that he should go immediately to Paradise, but that he should be remembered when Jesus, who was his fellow-sufferer now, with the inscription written above Him, This is the King of the Jews, should really come in that Kingdom. The penitent thief recognized Jesus as the true Messiah, and must have understood that although that day draining the dregs of humiliation, yet He would in some future day come in majesty and glory in His own Kingdom. It was then that the dying thief wished to be remembered. Jesus granted the request, assuring him that "today," even on such a day, when all outward appearances seemed so contrary, even at such a time, that he the penitent thief, would be with Him in Paradise in His coming Kingdom. We thus avoid a misinterpretation of Scripture which is contrary to fact. Other Scriptures show that Jesus did not go to Paradise that day,¹² and the record is plain that the thief did not die that day. At the very close of the day, when they took the thief down from the cross, he was not yet dead, so they broke his legs—an act that not only would not cause immediate death but that shows he was still living when the day ended.

JESUS PROVIDES FOR HIS MOTHER

Saint John seems to have been the one eye-witness of the scenes of this sad day who has left the most intimate personal record. After watching the first events around the cross, he appears to have gone to bring the mother of Jesus with the other Marys. Jesus in the midst of His agony lovingly thought of His widowed mother, and gave us an imperishable example of filial love by providing for her future. His last words to His mother were these,

Now standing close to the cross of Jesus were His mother and His mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary of Magdala. So Jesus, seeing His mother, and seeing the disciple whom He loved standing near, said to His mother,


"Behold, your son!"

Then He said to the disciple,

"Behold, your mother!"

And from that time the disciple received her into his own home.¹³

THE SINLESS SUFFERER

The Roman cross was shaped thus.  It was about nine feet long; the man's arms were stretched out on the cross-bar and cruel nails were driven through the hands and feet. Usually the cross was lifted high and dropped into its place with violence. This sort of capital punishment had been introduced among the Romans in order to make death as slow and lingering as possible. The crucified often hung for days in anguish until strength and consciousness at last failed and death intervened. It has been suggested that the stupefying potion offered Jesus at the beginning of His agony was provided by charitable women of Jerusalem who were touched by the horrors of this agonizing death. We have seen how Jesus refused it. He would meet death with all His faculties alert, and conquer it completely by voluntary self-surrender.

Jesus was thus crucified by wicked hands, but it was not the nails through His hands and feet, nor the excruciating physical pain of the crucifixion that took His life. All through that long, trying night the wine of the virus of our sins which He had drunk in Gethsemane had been working in His soul. He was bearing on His heart the sins of the whole world. He was dying for us, doing something we could never do and survive, working out our salvation by the substitution of His life for ours, rendering to God's justice an acceptable sacrifice provided by the love and mercy of God, and able to bring freedom to all who trust it. As the poet has said,

"The desperate tide of the great world's anguish
Was forced through the channel of a single heart."

"And now the Lord of glory was dying, a ransom for the race. . . Christ was the Prince of sufferers; but this suffering was from a sense of the malignity of sin, a knowledge that through familiarity with evil, man had become blinded to its enormity. Christ saw how deep is the hold of sin on the human heart, how few would be willing to break from its power. He knew that without help from God, humanity must perish, and He saw multitudes perishing within reach of abundant help.

"Upon Christ as our substitute was laid the iniquity of us all. He was counted a transgressor, that He might redeem us from the condemnation of the Law. The guilt of every descendant of Adam was pressing upon His ears. The wrath of God against sin, the terrible manifestation of His displeasure because of iniquity, filled the soul of His Son with consternation.

"Now with the terrible weight of the guilt He bears, He cannot see the Father's reconciling face. The withdrawal of the divine countenance from the Saviour in this hour of supreme anguish, pierced His heart with a sorrow that can never be fully

understood by man. So great was this agony that the physical pain was hardly felt.

"The spotless Son of God hung upon the cross, His flesh lacerated with stripes; those hands so often reached out in blessing, nailed to the wooden bars; those feet so tireless on ministries of love, spiked to the tree; that royal head pierced by the crown of thorns; those quivering lips shaped to the cry of woe. And all that He endured,—the blood drops that flowed from His head, His hands, His feet, the agony that racked His frame, and the unutterable anguish that filled His soul at the hiding of the Father's face, —speaks to each child of humanity declaring It is for thee that the Son of God consents to bear this burden of guilt; for thee He spoils the domain of death, and opens the gates of Paradise. He who stilled the angry waves, and walked the foam-capped billows, who made devils tremble, and disease flee, who opened blind eyes and called forth the dead to life,—offers Himself upon the cross a sacrifice, and this from love to thee. He, the Sin-bearer, endures the wrath of divine justice, and for thy sake becomes sin itself"—*"The Desire of Ages," pp. 752, 755.*

All through this trying night and day, and all through His dreadful agony, the faith of Jesus never wavered. At the end He said, "Father, into Thy hands I entrust my spirit," and died. The sacred record says:

Now from noon until three o'clock there was darkness over the whole land; but about three o'clock Jesus cried out in a loud voice, (as had been foretold)

"Eli, Eli, Lama Sabachthani?"—that is to say,

"My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?"¹⁴

Jesus uttered another loud cry, and then yielded up His spirit.

MARVELS FOLLOW

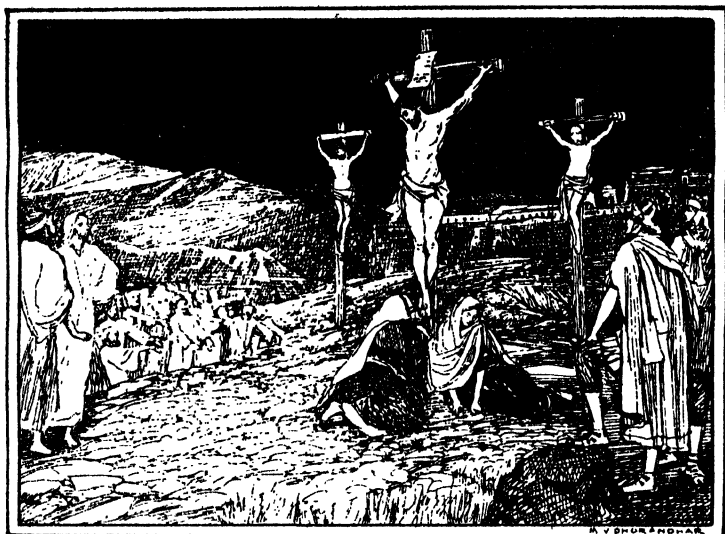
Immediately the curtain of the Sanctuary was torn in two from top to bottom; the earth quaked; the rocks split; the tombs opened. Many of God's people who were asleep in death awoke, and coming out of their tombs after Christ's resurrection, entered the holy city and showed themselves to many.

THE ROMAN CAPTAIN CONVERTED

As for the Roman captain and the soldiers who were with him keeping guard over Jesus, when they witnessed the earthquake and the other occurrences, they were filled with awe and exclaimed,

"Assuredly He was God's Son."¹⁵

Simon, also who was compelled to bear the cross of Jesus, was converted and became His follower, as also was one of the thieves crucified with Him. So even in His death it was demonstrated that He was both the Lord of nature and of the hearts of men.



It Is Finished

CHAPTER XXII

IN recording the events clustering around the death of Christ, Saint John adds an interesting item to the record of Saint Matthew as given in the previous chapter. He says:

After this, Jesus, knowing that every thing was now brought to an end, said—that the Scripture might be fulfilled,

"I am thirsty."

There was a jar of wine standing there. With this wine they filled a sponge, put it on the end of a stalk of hyssop, and lifted it to His mouth. As soon as Jesus had taken the wine, He said,

"It is finished."

And then, bowing His head, He yielded up His spirit.¹

"It is finished!" What a world of meaning in these three words?

Jesus had completed the work He had come to do. He had taken a human body and in it had conquered sin and death in order that the human family might be delivered from Satan's bondage.

From the birth of Jesus, Satan had tried to destroy Him, and all through His life Satan had used every artifice and exerted every wile in order to lead Him into sin—but all in vain. In the end Satan's futile rage had stirred up Jewish priests and rulers to hang Him on the cross, and there Jesus died "for sins, the innocent One for the guilty many, in order to bring us to God."²

Erroneous ideas concerning the nature of the soul have caused some to lose much of the depth of the meaning of the sacrifice of Christ. Such think that it was only the human body of Christ that was involved in the price paid for man's redemption. But they comprehend neither the awful malignity and virulence of sin nor the infinite sacrifice required to redeem man. They have a very superficial idea of the forces involved.

It is true that the Son of God had to take a human body in order to make the sacrifice, and that that human body was an integral part of the sacrifice, but the sacrifice was infinitely more than that. The ancient prophet said that it was the "soul" of Jesus and not the body only, that was "made an offering for sin."

Yet it pleased Jehovah to bruise Him; He hath put Him to grief; when Thou shalt make His soul an offering for sin, He shall see His seed, He shall prolong His days, and the pleasure of Jehovah shall prosper in His hand. . . Therefore will I divide Him a portion with the great, and He shall divide the spoil with the strong; because He poured out His soul unto death, and was numbered with the transgressors: yet He bore the sins of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.³

The Poet says of this,

"'Tis mystery all—the Immortal dies."

So Jesus really died; He was not alive in some other place those three days He lay in the tomb. To those who argue that the Son of God could not die we bring the plain words of Scripture that He did die. "The Son of man came to give *His life* as the redemption-price for many;" "I am laying down *my life* for the sheep;" "Christ at the right moment *died* for the ungodly;" "*One* having *died* for all;" "Our Lord Jesus Christ, who *died* on our behalf;" "That though God's grace He might taste *death* for every human being;" "He laid down *His life* on our behalf;" "Christ *died* for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures;" "Christ also once for all died for sins, the innocent One for the guilty many, in order to bring us to God. *He was put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit.*" "My soul is exceeding sorrowful *unto death.*"⁴

Truly it was the soul of Jesus that was the offering for sin. He poured out His soul for us in death, and was made alive again

on the third day by the Spirit. The full meaning of this unfathomable mystery will be the science and song of the redeemed throughout eternity. "Thanks be to God for His unspeakably precious gift." ⁵

After Jesus announced the glorious fact that the conflict was triumphantly finished, He uttered an exceedingly loud cry and expired. In the meantime the Jewish authorities had requested Pilate to take the crucified ones down from the cross so that they would not remain there over the Sabbath day. They broke the legs of the two robbers who had been crucified with Him, but when they came to Jesus, they found Him already dead. "They refrained from breaking His legs. One of the soldiers, however, made a thrust at his side with a lance, and immediately blood and water flowed out." This fulfilled another ancient prophecy which had said, "Not one of His bones shall be broken." ⁶

JOSEPH AND NICODEMUS ASK FOR THE BODY OF JESUS

Joseph and Nicodemus had been secret disciples of Jesus throughout His ministry. But through fear of expulsion from the synagogue they had not openly acknowledged Him. They were wealthy and were numbered among the rulers of the Jews. But in the sad hour of Jesus' crucifixion, when His other disciples had fled for fear, they came forward and boldly begged the body of Jesus, giving it the rite of an honourable burial. Although His enemies had condemned Him to die between two thieves, still God intervened and He was buried in Joseph's new tomb. Thus once more an ancient prophecy was fulfilled,

They made His grave with the wicked, and with a rich man in His death; because He had done no violence, neither was any deceit in His mouth. ⁷

It was the Preparation Day, and the Sabbath was near at hand. The women—those who had come with Jesus from Galilee—followed close behind, and saw the tomb and how His body was placed. Then they returned, and prepared spices and perfumes. On the Sabbath they rested in obedience to the commandment. ⁸

Although the Son of God lay silent in death, yet the angels in heaven rejoiced, for they knew He was the Resurrection and the Life. He had power to lay His life down and power to take it up again. Now the final destruction of sin and Satan was certain. The redemption of man was accomplished, and the universe was made secure from the inroads of rebellion for all eternity. There was joy in heaven. A few centuries were yet necessary for the history of sin to run its course and for the chapter to be finally

closed. In just a little time from this the voice of Jesus will again cry "It is done." That voice will then shake both heaven and earth and mark the final end of the conflict.⁹ But the words of Jesus, "It is finished," uttered on the cross, spanned the intervening years to the time when the full results of that sacrifice shall have been realized, and the host of the redeemed shall have been gathered into the happy golden age to come.

A BLESSED SABBATH OF REST

And so Jesus lay calmly resting as the setting sun ushered in God's holy Sabbath. This Sabbath had been instituted in the beginning when God rested on the seventh day, at the close of creation-week.¹⁰ And the Son was the Agent in that creation. "All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing that exists came into being." He at that time "blessed the seventh day and hallowed it."¹¹ Thus the weekly cycle was created. From that time forward through an endless eternity every recurring seventh day is made holy by this command and blessing of Almighty God. This can never be changed. One of the holy prophets of old has said, "Whatsoever God doeth, it shall be forever; nothing can be put to it, nor anything taken from it; and God hath done it, that men should fear before Him."¹² Because the Lord rested on the seventh day after He had finished His work of creation, the seventh day of the week is the true Lord's Day. So these Christian women kept this true Lord's Day "according to the Commandment," after they had seen where the body of their Lord was laid.

Just as after He had completed His work of creation He rested on the seventh day, so, after He had completed His work for which He had been born into the world, His hands folded in peace, He once again rested through the sacred hours of this same Sabbath day.

It is true there was grief and sorrow on that day among His disciples. But that sorrow and despair came as a result of unbelief. It should not have been. These disciples should have been watching in hope and expectancy at the tomb to greet Jesus when He arose. He had told them plainly. But they had apparently given up hope and were in the depths of despair. After His resurrection He said to them,

"O, dull-witted men, with minds so slow to believe all that the Prophets have spoken! Was there not a necessity for the Christ thus to suffer, and then enter into His glory?"¹³

All heaven had suffered with the suffering Son of God, but when that suffering ended and Jesus triumphantly shouted "It is finished," there was joy in heaven. Christ was resting the sacred hours after His completed work. The first day of the week He was

to rise and go about His appointed service. Jesus did not at this time change the day of the Sabbath as some think. In the new earth, the creation Sabbath, the same day on which Jesus lay at rest in Joseph's tomb after His completed work, will still be the day of rejoicing.

For as the new heavens and the new earth, which I will make, shall remain before me, saith Jehovah, so shall your seed and your name remain. And it shall come to pass that from one new moon to another, and from one Sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith Jehovah.¹⁴

During the Dark Ages many Christians departed from this custom, and the venerable day of the sun, that rival of the worship of the true God throughout the ages, was substituted in its place. But the seventh day, or Saturday, is still holy time, and its observance will be restored in the hearts and practise of all true believers before Jesus returns. The ancient prophet has foretold this restoration in these words,

And they that shall be of thee shall build the old waste places; thou shalt raise up the foundations of many generations; and thou shalt be called, The repairer of the breach, The restorer of paths to dwell in. If thou turn away thy foot from the Sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on My holy day; and call the Sabbath a delight, and the holy of Jehovah honourable; and shalt honour it, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words: then shalt thou delight thyself in Jehovah; and I will make thee to ride upon the high places of the earth; and I will feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father; for the mouth of Jehovah hath spoken it.¹⁵

CALVARY'S CROSS—THE DECISIVE BATTLE OF THE AGES

In this cross of Calvary the infinite love and patience and mercy of God are clearly manifested. Here also we see revealed the merciless malignity of Satan. At last Satan is unmasked before the universe. The darkness that surrounded Calvary at the hour of Christ's death was more than physical darkness. Hosts of the "powers of darkness" were there fighting the decisive battle of the ages, and they lost. Satan had charged God before the angelic host as being unjust and tyrannical, and claimed to be able to establish a better government. At Calvary's cross, God's government was vindicated.

To fully understand this we recall an incident occurring just before the death of Jesus. Jesus had prayed, "Father, glorify Thy name."

Thereupon there came a voice from the sky, "I have glorified it and will also glorify it again." The crowd that stood by and heard it said that there had been thunder. Others said, "An angel spoke to Him."

"It is not for my sake," said Jesus, "that that voice came, but for your sakes. Now is a judgment of this world; now will the Prince of this world be driven out. And I—if I am lifted up from the earth—will draw all men to me."

He said this to indicate the kind of death He would die.¹⁶

The lifting up of the Son of God on Calvary's cross was the final victory for God and the principles of truth and righteousness; it also marked the utter defeat of Satan and of the principles of evil. The hour of the apparent defeat of Jesus was the hour of His greatest triumph. On the dark background that surrounded Calvary, Almighty God painted the wonderful picture of His marvelous love. Since then Satan—the Prince of this world—has been cast out of the heavens and is confined to this earth. He is a defeated and humbled foe. He now knows that he cannot finally conquer and perpetuate his principles and is fighting the battle of despair, trying to drag down to ruin with him as many of the human race as is possible. How sad to see so many utterly deceived. The inspired writer says:

Then I heard a loud voice speaking in Heaven. It said,

'The salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God have now come, and the sovereignty of His Christ; for the accuser of our brethren has been hurled down—he who, day after day and night after night, was wont to accuse them in the presence of God. But they have gained the victory over him because of the blood of the Lamb and of the testimony which they have borne, and because they held their lives cheap and did not shrink even from death. "For this reason be glad, O Heaven, and you, who live in Heaven! Alas for the earth and the sea! For the Devil has come down to you; full of fierce anger, because he knows that his appointed time is short."¹⁷

So Satan was defeated at the cross, and he knows that "his appointed time is short"—it is now almost ended. His wrath and anger increase with the passing days. The chaos in the world today finds its explanation in this historic fact. Let each one beware lest he be dragged down to destruction with Satan. How fortunate are those who are able to read the real cause of many current events in these inspired writings!

COMPLETE ATONEMENT FOR SIN

This is the record of the facts of that full and complete atonement made on the cross. These facts are worthy of careful meditation. The death of Jesus was foreseen and foretold both from the most ancient times by the prophets and again and again by Jesus Himself. It is unique among all the deaths that have taken place in the world. He died of a broken heart, and both blood and water flowed from the wound of the Roman spear that was thrust into His side. "But it was not the spear thrust, it was not the pain of the cross, that caused the death of Jesus. That cry 'uttered with a loud voice,' at the moment of death, the stream of blood and water that flowed from His side, declared that He died of a broken heart. His heart was broken in mental anguish. He was slain by the sin of the world."—*"The Desire of Ages,"* p. 772.

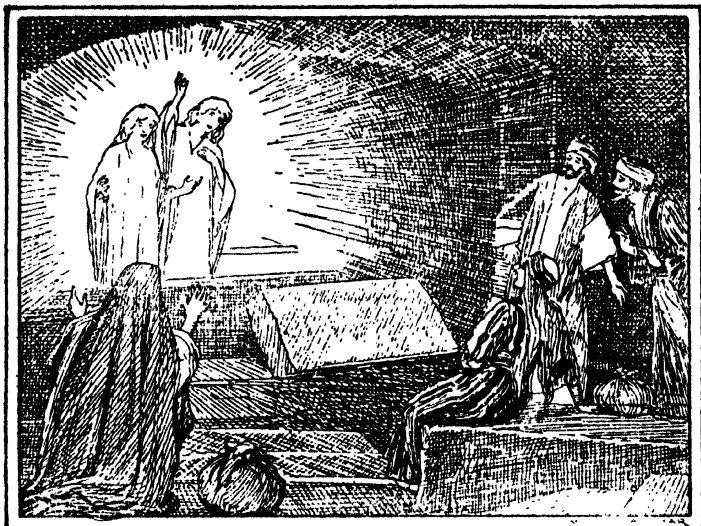
Surely He hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem Him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned everyone to his own way; and Jehovah hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all.¹⁸

Jesus was a comparatively young man of abstemious habits, and must have had abundant reserves of vitality. Yet in a very short time after He was placed on the cross He was dead. At the same time those wicked thieves whose vital forces had been weakened by dissipation were still alive. Even Pilate, the Roman governor, could not believe that He was already dead.¹⁹

Another point should be emphasized. Jesus surrendered His life voluntarily. No man had the power to take it from Him without this surrender. Again and again during His lifetime, men took up stones to slay Him. Officers of the law were sent in vain to arrest Him. But when the time chosen by God had come, the record says:

And Jesus cried out in a loud voice, and said, "Father to Thy hands I entrust my spirit." And after uttering these words He yielded up His spirit.²⁰

He had said during His life "I lay down my life for the sheep. Therefore doth the Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I may take it again. No one taketh it away from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again."²¹



The Lord Is Risen

CHAPTER XXIII

AFTER the chief priests and rulers of the Jews knew that Jesus was dead and safely resting in Joseph's new tomb, they did not feel the satisfaction or peace of mind they had hoped for. Even His silence in death aroused their fears. The strange events of the past day filled them with great uneasiness. It is remarkable that they remembered the prediction of Jesus that He would rise the third day—a prediction that the disciples so completely forgot. So they came in a body to Pilate, and begged him to make the tomb secure for they reminded him of Jesus' promise to rise again.

"You can have a guard," said Pilate: "go and make all safe, as best you can."¹

So they took a strong guard of Roman soldiers, those fine fighting men who were afraid of nothing in the world, and put the grave in their charge. They also sealed the stone with a Roman seal, running cords across the stone and sealing them to the rock on either

side. Thus the mighty Roman Empire exerted all its power to hold Jesus in that tomb. Back of that seal, and behind those Roman soldiers stood all the power and authority of that great Empire, against which no earthly power or combination of powers had been able to stand. But the greatest empire the world has ever seen is puny and powerless before the decree of Jehovah. It was the will of God that Jesus should rise—how vain the attempt of men to withstand that will!

Just before dawn on that first-day morning the stalwart Roman guards were vigilantly keeping watch, when suddenly, the earth became lightened with great glory; the night around them was turned into day, and there was a great earthquake. With terror too great for words they saw a bright and shining angel descend from heaven and roll away the great stone, snapping the Roman seals, and opening the grave. These guards had fought every combination of men and beasts in every land; but they quailed in terror before this angel from heaven.

In the meantime Jesus awakened from the sleep of death, and emerged from the tomb amid the rending of rocks and quaking of the earth. Midnight darkness at noonday, and earthquake, had marked the hour of the vicarious death of the Son of God; brightness of midday at night, and another earthquake marked the hour of His return to life.²

Mary, from whom had been cast seven devils, and who loved Jesus most intensely was the first at the tomb. Jesus appeared to her and said, "Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended unto the Father: but go unto my brethren, and say to them 'I ascend unto my Father and your Father and my God and your God.'"

Mary at once took the message to the disciples. "I have seen the Lord," she said.³

Jesus then ascended to the Father to present His sacrifice and to have it accepted by God. He is now man as well as God. Jesus still retains His humanity. How wonderful that He is still our Brother. "Take this message to *My brethren*. I ascend unto *My Father* and *yur Father*, and *My God* and *yur God*."

"WHY SEEK YE THE LIVING AMONG THE DEAD?"⁴

In the meantime the other women had come to the sepulchre bringing more spices for the completion of the work of embalming the body. As they wondered how they would roll the great stone back, they were surprised to see it already moved aside, and a glorious shining angel seated upon it, and a Roman guard, trembling violently, cowering before him. Their hearts were struck with terror.

But the angel said to the women,

"As for you, dismiss your fears, I know that it is Jesus that you are looking for—the crucified One. He is not here: He has come back to life, as He foretold. Come and see the place where He lay. And go quickly and tell His disciples that He has risen from the dead and is going before you into Galilee: there you shall see Him. Remember, I have told you."

They quickly left the tomb and ran, still terrified but full of unspeakable joy, to carry the news to His disciples. And then suddenly they saw Jesus coming to meet them.

"Peace be to you," He said.

And they came and clasped His feet, bowing to the ground before Him. ⁵

The Roman guards had fled in terror, spreading the news everywhere that Jesus was truly the Son of God, for they had seen Him rise from the dead. The word was carried to the chief priests and elders. In great fear they called the guards who came into the presence burdened with the greatest message mortal men had ever carried; but the wily priests bribed those godless men with great gifts of gold, and they went forth, their pockets weighted with gold, and their consciences weighted with the monstrous lie, "His disciples came during the night and stole His body while we were asleep." ⁶ It had taken but thirty pieces of silver to secure the betrayal of the Son of God. But now that He had risen from the dead, great wealth was spent in a vain attempt to suppress the wonderful truth.

THE CERTAINTY OF THE RESURRECTION

These priests were Satan's tools. But Satan stands discredited. The superhuman efforts he put forth only make the truth of Jesus' resurrection more certain. The spear thrust opening the heart made the theory of suspended animation untenable; the darkness of despair with which he enveloped the very disciples, made it impossible for them to have invented the resurrection theory; and finally the sealing of the tomb by the Roman seal, locking it with all the power of the mighty Roman Empire and surrounding it with a strong Roman guard, made the theory of a stolen body the height of absurdity. *Jesus rose from the dead.*

He next appeared unto Peter. Because of his base denial of Jesus the night of the betrayal, Peter was in the depth of despair. So in love, Jesus appeared first to him.

Later in the day two disciples were mournfully making their way to Emmaus, a village a few miles from Jerusalem, when Jesus

joined them. They did not recognize Him. He took their Holy Scriptures and in passage after passage showed them how that every thing that had happened to Him had been accurately foretold, and was therefore in the providence of God. He condemned them severely for their blindness in not understanding. As they reached the village, He was about to pass on when they pressed Him to stay. He revealed Himself to them in the breaking of bread, and immediately vanished from sight.

In surprise and wonder they said,

"Were not our hearts burning within us while He talked to us on the way and explained the Scriptures to us?"

So they rose and without an hour's delay returned to Jerusalem, and found the Eleven and the rest met together, who said to them,

"Yes, it is true; the Master has come back to life. He has been seen by Simon."

Then they related what had happened on the way, and how He had been recognized by them in the breaking of the bread.

JESUS HIMSELF MEETS THE ELEVEN

While they were thus talking, He Himself stood in their midst and said,

"Peace be to you!"

Startled, and in the utmost alarm, they thought they were looking at a spirit; but He said to them,

"Why such alarm? and why are there such questionings in your minds? See My hands and My feet—it is My very self. Feel Me and see, for a spirit has not flesh and bones as you see I have."

And then He showed them His hands and His feet (with the nail prints.)

But, while they still could not believe it for joy and were full of astonishment, He asked them,

"Have you any food here?"

And they gave Him a piece of roasted fish, and some honeycomb, and He took it and ate it in their presence.

And He said to them,

"This is what I told you while I was still with you—that everything must be fulfilled that is written in the Law of Moses and in the Prophets and the Psalms concerning me."

Then He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, and He said,

"Thus it is written that the Christ would suffer and on the third day rise again from among the dead; and that procla-

mation would be made, in His name, of repentance and forgiveness of sins to all the nations, beginning in Jerusalem. You are witnesses as to these things. And remember that I am to send out my Father's promised gift to rest upon you. But, as for you, wait patiently in the city until you are clothed with power from on high.' ⁷

THOMAS, THE SCEPTICAL, CONVINCED

Thus both the empty tomb and the resurrected, glorified body of Jesus, seen again and again by so many, offer abundant evidence of the fact of the resurrection. At the next appearance of Jesus to His disciples, after eight days, Jesus convinced Thomas who had said,

"Unless I see in His hands the wound made by the nails, and put my finger into the wound, and put my hand into His side, I will never believe it."

Then He said to Thomas,

"Bring your finger here and feel my hands; bring your hand and put it into my side; and do not be ready to disbelieve but to believe."

"MY LORD AND MY GOD!" replied Thomas.

"Because you have seen Me," replied Jesus, "you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed." ⁸

The next meeting of Jesus with His disciples was after they had returned to their nets. They felt they had failed, and that now Jesus could not use them. But He reassured them and sent them forth again to feed His lambs and His sheep. ⁹

THE RISEN SAVIOUR MEETS WITH BELIEVERS

There is but one more recorded meeting of Jesus with His disciples. Before He died He had made a definite appointment of a meeting at a definite place in Galilee. This meeting was not only with the disciples but also with other believers. Saint Paul tells us, "He was seen by more than five hundred brethren at once, most of whom are still alive." ¹⁰

Saint Matthew records this meeting.

As for the eleven disciples, they proceeded into Galilee, to the hill where Jesus had arranged to meet them. There they saw Him and prostrated themselves before Him. Yet some doubted.

Jesus, however, came near and said to them,

"All power in Heaven and over the earth has been given to Me. Go, therefore, and make disciples of all the nations;

baptize them into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit; and teach them to obey every command which I have given you. And remember, I am with you always, day by day, until the close of the Age." ¹¹

THE GREAT COMMISSION

Standing but a step from the throne of Almighty God, Jesus gave this commission to His disciples. His sacrifice was full and complete. The conditions of the atonement had been fulfilled. He had been accepted by the Father and ordained for His mediatorial work. Clothed with boundless authority, He commissioned all who believe on Him to make the great facts of His Kingdom known. This kingdom was not to be a temporal kingdom but a spiritual one, in which loving, believing hearts from every nation of earth would be enrolled as loyal citizens.

They were to begin in Jerusalem, the very city that had rejected and crucified Him, and from there gradually, extend their efforts until they had gone to every part of the habitable globe.

Jesus took upon Himself the responsibility for the success of their work. His Holy Spirit was to go with them. So long as they taught "whatsoever He had commanded them," the fullness of His power would be with them "until the close of the age," or "unto the end of the world."

THE AUTHENTICITY OF THE RESURRECTION

The resurrection of Jesus Christ is not only the most important fact of history but it is also the best authenticated. Let us consider the following evidence:

This resurrection from the dead was foretold by the most ancient prophets many centuries before it occurred.

It was foretold repeatedly by Jesus himself before He died.

There was abundant proof of the actual occurrence itself, attested by numerous and competent witnesses worthy of all confidence.

The disciples began to testify immediately the fact of His resurrection in the very city that had rejected Him and before the very people who had cried, "Crucify Him! Crucify Him!" with such indisputable evidence that three thousand were converted in one day, five thousand on another occasion; and finally the record says, "God's message continued to spread, and the number of the disciples in Jerusalem very greatly increased, and very many priests obeyed the faith." ¹²

It must be granted that overwhelmingly convincing evidence must have been presented of the fact of the resurrection to have caused such a revulsion of feeling in so short a time as to create in

Jerusalem the beginning of a strong church that was destined eventually to evangelize the whole world.

But the crowning evidence of all is the fact that one of the most capable young men of that generation, one who was the friend and champion of those who murdered Christ, and who for some years was the most relentless and bitter persecutor of the infant church, was himself given such unmistakable evidence of the fact of the resurrection that he changed about completely and became one of the greatest and most eloquent propagators of the doctrine. This man was Saul of Tarsus, who, while on the way to Damascus to put to death believers in Jesus, was given a vision of the risen Christ, met Him face to face, and became Paul the Apostle, one of the great founders of the Christian church.¹³ He gave his testimony concerning this death and resurrection of Jesus as follows:

But let me recall to you, brethren, the Good News which I brought you, which you accepted, and on which you are standing, through which also you are obtaining salvation, if you bear in mind the words in which I proclaimed it. . . . For I repeated to you the all important fact which also I had been taught, that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures; that He was buried; that He rose to life again on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures, and was seen by Peter, and then by the Twelve. Afterwards He was seen by more than five hundred brethren at once, most of whom are still alive, although some of them have now fallen asleep. Afterwards He was seen by James, and then by all the Apostles. And last of all, as to one of untimely birth, He appeared to me also.¹⁴

There is nothing whatever to set against this incontrovertible evidence which attests that Jesus of Nazareth proclaimed salvation for all who would believe in Him, and in support of this announced Himself to be the Son of God, and finally proved this claim by rising from the dead. From this event began the great religious impulse which rescued the world from the estate of chaos and ruin, and turned it into that path of progress which is responsible for whatever advancement the world has made since that time.



JESUS ASCENDS TO HEAVEN



"I WILL COME AGAIN"

The Ascension

CHAPTER XXIV

FOR forty days after His resurrection Jesus appeared many times to those who had believed on Him. He did not appear in His resurrected and now glorified body to unbelievers, because He had not come to be an earthly King, but to be King of truth, and to establish a Kingdom of Heaven through the power of the Holy Spirit. Only those who would truly enthrone Him in their hearts could become citizens of this Kingdom. Outward show or general excitement, such as would have taken place had Jesus manifested Himself openly in His glorified body before the multitude, would have but hindered this work.

But it was not His purpose to remain on earth. He had a work to accomplish which could only be accomplished by taking His place on His Father's throne in heaven. Before beginning that work He tarried long enough on earth for His disciples to become thoroughly acquainted with Him in His glorified body. He gave authentic evidence that He was the risen Saviour, and opened their hearts to understand the Scriptures which had foretold His death and resurrection. They would no longer associate Him with the tomb, but were to go forth to witness to the world that He was the risen Christ, the living Saviour, the Giver of spiritual life to all who would come to God through Him.

Now that this work was accomplished, Jesus led His disciples out of the city to the Mount of Olives, which had been so closely associated with His ministry of love. Here He gave them His parting message. He said,

"It is not for you to know times or epochs which the Father hath reserved within His own authority; and yet you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you,

and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judæa and Samaria and to the remotest parts of the earth."

When He had said this and while they were looking at Him, He was carried up and a cloud closing beneath Him hid Him from their sight. But, while they stood intently gazing into the sky as He went, suddenly there were two men in white garments standing by them, who said, "Galileans, why stand looking into the sky? This same Jesus who has been taken up from you into heaven will come in just the same way as you have seen Him going into Heaven."¹

So Jesus went to heaven visibly and in bodily form. He had assured them that He was to return when they had fulfilled His commission to carry to earth's remotest bounds the Good News concerning the Kingdom He had established. He had pledged to them the immeasurable power of the Holy Spirit, making Himself responsible for the success of their work.

For nearly two thousand years this work has been going forward. We have now reached the generation which is destined to see the work finished. It is the firm faith of many devout believers in the Holy Scriptures, that some of us now living on the earth will witness the return of the Lord Jesus to gather to Himself, according to His promise, all who have believed in Him.

JESUS TRIUMPHANTLY ENTERS HEAVEN

There were others who accompanied Him beside the angels. Jesus had not entered into death and returned without bringing with Him trophies of His victory. For centuries Satan had deceived and enslaved men. Because of this bondage, all through the ages men had moved on in gloomy procession into the insatiable maw of the tomb; but now all this is changed. The promise made at the fall of man is fulfilled. The Son of God has died. He has entered the domain of death and has returned a mighty conqueror, bringing with him representatives of the generations of the past, thus enlightening with hope of a future resurrection the resting place of those who had believed His promise, and also shedding the light of confident assurance across the pathway of the generations yet to come.

Saint Paul has said: "He has put an end to death and has brought Life and Immortality to light through the Good News."² Jesus said, "Do not be afraid; I am the First and the Last, and the everliving One. I died; but I am now alive until the Ages of the Ages, and I have the keys of Death and of Hades."³ The Scripture tell us of this company whom Jesus brought back

with Him from the grave. Saint Matthew states,—“The earth quaked; the rocks split; the tombs opened: and many of God’s people who were asleep in death awoke. And coming out of their tombs after Christ’s resurrection they entered the Holy City and showed themselves to many.”⁴ Saint Paul tells us that when Jesus ascended He led with Him “a host of captives.” The Apostle John saw them in heaven and gives a description of their work.⁵

Thus Jesus the Son of God returned to the celestial courts followed by this multitude of captives set free at His resurrection, and surrounded by the host of heavenly angels, whose shouts of triumph and songs of holy joy mortal ears were not then permitted to hear. But the burden of their song has been recorded. As they drew near the city of God, this beautiful chorus was sung: “Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in.” The joyful response came back from those everlasting walls: “Who is this King of glory?” With joyful acclaim the ascending escort replied, “The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle, Lift up your heads, O ye gates; even lift them up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in.”⁶

With joy and song the ascending throng swept through the portals of heaven into the very presence of God the Father, and Jesus presented to Him the trophies of His grace. The work the Son of God had gone to earth to accomplish had been completed. “Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other.”⁷ The Father then bade His Son take His place at His right hand, and the word was given “Let all the angels of God worship Him.”

With joy unutterable they bowed in adoration and worship, swelling the chorus until all heaven was filled with the harmony of the song: “It is fitting that the Lamb which has been offered in sacrifice should receive all power and riches and wisdom and might and honour and glory and blessing.”⁸

This joy, great as it was, is but the prelude of that greater joy when Jesus shall come the second time and open the graves that contain those who have believed in Him, and bring back from the gates of death all His children. With them, once more He will ascend to God and to His throne, and then will be repeated in higher, sweeter strains, by the larger company, this same song. Then will be fulfilled the words,

“And as for every created thing in Heaven and on the earth and under the earth and on the sea, and every thing that was in any of these, I heard them say, ‘To Him who is seated on the throne, and to the Lamb, be ascribed all blessing and honour and glory and might, until the Ages of the Ages! Amen!’”⁹



The Ever-Living Deliverer

CHAPTER XXV

AS Jesus of Nazareth was unique in His birth, in His life and in His death, so was He unique above all other men born in this world in that His death did not end His work and influence. On the contrary, after His resurrection He ascended to heaven in power, there to begin a work that has continued until this day.

The record of Saint Mark says, "So the Lord Jesus after having thus spoken to them was taken up into Heaven, and sat down at the right hand of God. But they went out and made proclamation everywhere, the Lord working with them and confirming their Message by the signs which accompanied it." ¹

This power accompanying the preaching of the apostles was the power of the Holy Spirit, whom Jesus had promised to send from heaven. He had said, "I will ask the Father and He will give you another Advocate to be forever with you—the Spirit of Truth. That Spirit the world cannot receive, because it does not see Him or know Him. You know Him, because He remains by your side and is in you. I will not leave you orphans; I am coming to you." ²

So Jesus was to be their Helper in heaven at the right hand of Almighty God, and the Holy Spirit was to be their Helper on earth, ever abiding in them to give them victory over sin and to perfect righteous characters within, so working with them and helping them to win the world for God.

For ten days after Jesus had ascended bodily to heaven the disciples continued in earnest prayer, seeking God in their fixed place of meeting in Jerusalem. Then, just fifty days after the resurrection, and ten days after the ascension, the Holy Spirit came.

"At length, on the day of the Harvest Festival, they had all met in one place; when suddenly there came from the sky a sound as of a strong rushing blast of wind. This filled the whole

house where they were sitting; and they saw tongues of what looked like fire distributing themselves over the assembly, and on the head of each person a tongue alighted. They were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak in foreign languages according as the Spirit gave them words to utter"³

Men had come from all parts of the world to this great Festival and were surprised to hear these disciples speaking to them in their own tongues. As a result the Holy Spirit wrought a wonderful work that day in the hearts of men, which illustrates for us how He has worked ever since. After listening to the discourse of Peter it is said, "Stung to the heart by these words, they said to Peter and the rest of the Apostles, 'Brethren what are we to do?' 'Repent,' replied Peter, and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, with a view to the remission of your sins, and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For to you belongs the promise, and to your children, and to all who are far off, whoever the Lord our God may call.'"⁴

Three thousand were baptized that day. The Holy Spirit has been in the world from that time to this, convicting the world of sin and convincing souls that Jesus of Nazareth is the very Son of God. Those who have yielded to His influence have been cleansed from sin and have been given power to live pure and holy lives.

"Repent," "be baptized," "receive the Holy Spirit," was the answer of Peter to that most important question, "What shall we do to be saved?" God will not inflict the penalty for sin the second time. So when we, by repentance and by baptism, accept the atonement He has made, the verdict of "Not Guilty" is pronounced, and all charges against us are forever cancelled. The sinner thus absolved from guilt makes a new start with a spotless record.

Then this same Holy Spirit comes into the life, and through the mediation of our living Saviour-King at God's right hand, makes actual within us all that was made possible by the death on Calvary's cross. The baptized Christian, filled with the Holy Spirit, ministered by the risen Christ, is therefore the visible, living evidence that Jesus died and rose again, and is the Saviour of all mankind.

And now we have come to the end of this book. These pages have not told some ancient, interesting myth, but have recorded the true story of how the God and Father of the spirits of all men has made a revelation of Himself in a Son. This revelation is perfect and complete and is the end of all search after God. The conviction must have come home to the heart of the reader that God has now in truth taken human flesh. Humanity has been laid hold of by divinity and new power has been poured into the life of the race.

The great gulf is bridged which separated man from God. We do not have to wait for some future birth to be reunited with God. Just as the Son of God was united with us by the wonder-working power of the Holy Spirit when born in Bethlehem nearly two thousand years ago, just so we may now be united with God through the Holy Spirit who takes up His abode within us, if we yield our lives to Him. Because Jesus was the manifestation of God in human nature, we may through that same Holy Spirit now be made "partakers of the divine nature." ⁵

Those who do not individually receive this inner experience during this present life, and who do not allow the Holy Spirit to produce the fruits of righteousness in their lives here, thus restoring the image of God in their souls, fail utterly and eternally. If we thus fail of achieving this union with Him here in this life it is but an empty dream to hope for union with God in some future birth. May each one realize in his own soul this experience which the incarnation of the Son of God has made possible, and which satisfies the deepest longings of the human heart that many may have vaguely felt, but not before fully understood.

Jesus the Messiah has removed every obstacle, and now the Holy Spirit's power is for each one who claims it in His name. By this means the life of Jesus here recorded may be reproduced in all who have personal faith in Him as the Saviour of the lost, and they will triumph over heredity and environment, not only living a pure and holy life in this present world, but will also live that fuller and better life in that land of immortality which lies just beyond.

"HAVE this mind in you which was also in Christ Jesus: who, existing in the form of God, counted not the being on an equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, becoming obedient even unto death, yea, the death of the cross. Wherefore also God highly exalted Him, and gave unto Him the name which is above every name; that in the name of JESUS every knee should bow, of things in heaven and things on earth and things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that JESUS CHRIST is LORD, to the glory of God the Father."⁶

"JESUS CHRIST, THE SAME YESTERDAY,
AND TO-DAY, AND FOREVER."⁷

WOE to a world that vainly tries to escape from Jesus Christ. They may deny His deity, dispute His power, disbelieve His resurrection, explain away His existence, deride Him as a phantom, insult Him as "a spirit medium," philosophize over Him as a myth, accept Him as a mere human teacher, misquote His words to sustain their opinions, pervert His teachings, and despise His precious blood; but when all this is done their difficulty is not removed, for Christ the King still lives at God's right hand. "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, to-day, and forever;" the Christ "who was, who is, and who is to come." He who had glory with His Father "before the world was," shame with man during His earthly pilgrimage; and who having suffered these things, has entered "into glory"—that same Jesus still lives in all the majesty of His divine character, and in all the powers of an everlasting life. Herod could not kill Him, Satan could not seduce Him, death could not destroy Him, the sepulcher could not hold Him; and yet He stands forth upon the highest pinnacle of heavenly glory, proclaimed of God, acknowledged by angels, adored by saints, and feared by devils, as a living, personal Christ; rejected, crucified, exalted, glorified, and coming again in like manner as He ascended; to raise the dead, to judge the world, to save His people, to be glorified in His saints, to crush the usurper, to destroy His foes, and to reign forever as the Lord of all.

—H. L. HASTINGS.

APPENDIX

Unless otherwise designated all New Testament quotations are from "The New Testament in Modern Speech," by Weymouth. Occasionally marginal references are adopted; A. V. means King James' Authorized Version; A. R. V. means American Revised Version. The Scripture portions used in the body of the book are, as a rule, indented and not enclosed in quotation marks.

CHAPTER I

1. Mathew 7: 29, A. R. V.
2. Luke 17: 20, 21, A. R. V.
3. Mark 1: 24.
4. Mark 1: 27.
5. Mark 1: 29-31.
6. Mark 1: 32-34.
7. Luke 4: 43.

CHAPTER II

1. Mark 1: 40.
2. Mark 2: 1-12.
3. Luke 5: 25.

CHAPTER III

1. Luke 7: 16.
2. Matthew 9: 35, A. V.
3. Luke 23: 27, A. V.

CHAPTER IV

1. Luke 1: 28-33.
2. Luke 1: 34-38.
3. Luke 1: 42-55.
4. Matthew 1: 18-25.

CHAPTER V

1. Luke 2: 6, 7.
2. Hebrews 1: 14, A. V.
3. Hebrews 1: 6, A. V.
4. Luke 2: 8-12.
5. Luke 2: 14-20.

CHAPTER VI

1. Luke 2: 25-28.

CHAPTER VII

1. Matthew 2: 1, 2.
2. Numbers 24: 17, A. R. V.
3. Matthew 2: 3-11.
4. Matthew 2: 12-23.
5. Mark 6: 3.
6. Luke 2: 39, 40.

CHAPTER VIII

1. Luke 1: 80.
2. Matthew 3: 2-3.
3. Matthew 3: 7-12.

CHAPTER IX

1. Mark 1: 7, 8.
2. Matthew 3: 14-16.
3. Mark 1: 9-11.
4. Micah 6: 2, A. R. V.
5. Proverbs 8: 22-31, A. R. V.
6. Colossians 1: 15-17.
7. John 1: 1-14.

8. John 17: 5.
9. John 5: 17-26.
10. John 9: 35-38.
11. John 1: 29-31.

CHAPTER X

1. Hebrews 2: 14-18.
2. Hebrews 4: 15, 16.
3. Luke 4: 1, 2.
4. Mark 1: 13.
5. Matthew 4: 1-11.
6. Luke 4: 13.
7. Matthew 26: 41, A. V.
8. James 4: 7.
9. Hebrews 5: 7-10.

CHAPTER XI

1. John 3: 30.
2. John 1: 39-41.
3. Matthew 4: 19.
4. John 2: 1-11.

CHAPTER XII

1. John 2: 16.
2. John 2: 17-21.
3. John 3: 1-15.
4. Jeremiah 17: 9, A. V.
5. Job 14: 4, A. V.
6. Psalms 51: 10, A. V.
7. Ezekiel 36: 26.
8. John 1: 9-13.
9. Numbers 21: 4-9.
10. John 1: 29, A. R. V. (Margin.)
11. John 3: 16-21.

CHAPTER XIII

1. John 4: 7-42.
2. John 7: 37-39.

CHAPTER XIV

1. Matthew 14: 15-17.
2. John 6: 5-10.
3. Mark 6: 39-44.
4. John 6: 12-14.
5. John 6: 15.
6. Matthew 14: 23, 23.
7. Matthew 14: 24.
8. Mark 6: 48, 49.
9. Matthew 14: 26-33.
10. Mark 6: 51, 52.
11. John 6: 21.

CHAPTER XV

1. Acts 13: 47; Isaiah 49: 6.
2. John 6: 60-71.
3. Mark 7: 24-26.
4. Matthew 15: 23, 23.
5. Colossians 3: 11; Romans 10: 12, 13.

6. Matthew 15: 23-28.
7. 1 Peter 1: 1; 2: 25.

CHAPTER XVI

1. John 1: 29.
2. Leviticus 4th Chapter.
3. Hebrews 10: 4.
4. John 2: 19-21, A. V.
5. John 3: 14, 15.
6. Matthew 20: 28.
7. John 6: 51.
8. Matthew 16: 13-23.
9. Matthew 17: 1-3.
10. Luke 9: 30-35.
11. Deuteronomy 34: 5-7.
12. Jude 9.
13. 2 Kings 2: 1-19, A. R. V.
14. 2 Peter 1: 16-18; 1 Thess. 4: 13-17.
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